

HAND OF FATE

THE HAND OF

# FATE

No. 25

JUNE  
10c

RUN, RUN! WE CAN WAIT!  
WE'VE WAITED YEARS... AND  
SOON YOU MUST STOP TO  
REST... SOON WE WILL GET  
REVENGE FOR YOUR BETRAYING  
US INTO DEATH!







WEB COMIC  
UNIVERSE.COM



# INTRODUCING Comfo-Gard

**THE AMAZING NEW MENSTRUAL SHIELD THAT GIVES  
SURE, SAFE PROTECTION DIFFERENTLY**

Yes, here it is—look at the illustration and see at once why Comfo-Gard is different. Comfo-Gard looks like and is an abbreviated pantie—except Comfo-Gard is especially cut to hug the body contours. Comfo-Gard is made of finest fabric and elastic materials and is lined with sheerest, softest rubber to make it liquid repellent.

## NO PINS — NO HOOKS

Comfo-Gard eliminates pins and hooks. "No-slip" loops hold the napkin securely without pins or hooks. You'll enjoy this extra freedom from annoyances.

## ELIMINATES CHAFING

Comfo-Gard's wide crotch keeps the pad flat and smooth all the time. The elastic band hugs the hips, thus eliminating one of the most common causes of chafing.

## NO TELL-TALE BUMPS

Comfo-Gard's special form-fit design completely does away with tell-tale bumps.

## NO STAINS — NO OVERFLOW

The special sheer soft rubber lining makes soiling or overflowing impossible. For the first time you'll really feel safe.

## LONG LIFE — WASHES IN A JIFFY

Comfo-Gard will give years of good service. Washes in a jiffy and dries almost instantly. Try Comfo-Gards today.

## TRY COMFO-GARDS

**60 DAYS FREE . . .  
SEND NO MONEY**

Here is our offer:—fill out the coupon below and mail in the postage-free envelope. We'll rush Comfo-Gards to you in an unmarked package. Take 60 days to decide whether you wish to keep Comfo-Gards. If not a full refund of the purchase price will be made immediately.

**60 DAY  
TRIAL  
COUPON**

**SEND  
NO  
MONEY**



**2 FOR  
\$1.98**

**MALEN MFG. CO. Dept. A12**  
20 Greene St.  
New York, N. Y.

Please rush two (2) Comfo-Gards in a plain package. I will pay postman only \$1.98 plus postage. If not satisfied after 60 days I may return the Comfo-Gards for a full refund of the purchase price.

My waist size is \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

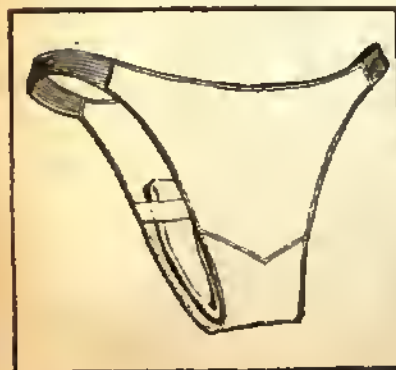
Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Check here if you enclose \$1.98 and we pay postage. Name refund offer holds.

## USE COMFO-GARDS AS PANTIES OTHER TIMES

Only Comfo-Gards can be worn as panties during the rest of the time. Just remove the pad and Comfo-Gards become comfortable abbreviated panties. They are wonderful under slacks, sport shirts and beach wear.



OF ALL THE PROFESSIONS IN THE WORLD, ALBERT TORRANCE... YOURS IS THE LOWEST, THE MOST DESPICABLE OF ALL! TO BE A GRAVE-ROBBER, A MAN MUST BE WITHOUT CONSCIENCE, WITHOUT MORALS, WITHOUT DECENCY! THAT DESCRIPTION FITS YOU PERFECTLY, DOESN'T IT, ALBERT? BECAUSE YOU ARE A SCAVENGER OF THE DEAD... A GHOUL OF THE GRAVEYARDS! YOU ARE...

# HE WHO ROBS the DEAD

YEAH... SURE I ROB THE DEAD! WHY NOT? THEY AIN'T GOT NO USE FOR THE LI'L TRINKETS I TAKE OFF 'EM! BUT I HAVE... AN THE DEAD ARE GONNA MAKE ME RICH SOME DAY— SO RICH I WON'T EVEN LOOK AT JUNK LIKE GOLD AND DIAMONDS!

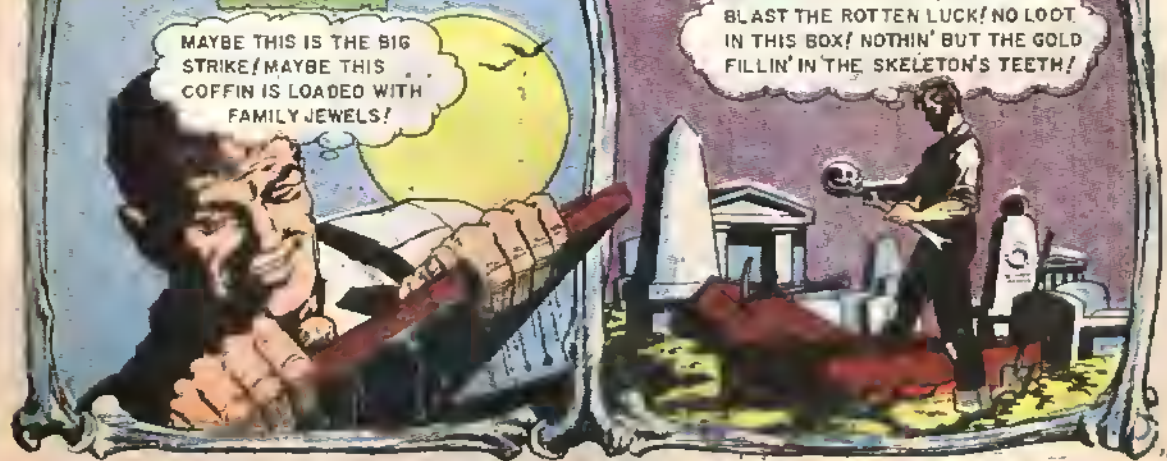


YOU HAVE NO RESPECT FOR THE DEAD, DO YOU, ALBERT? YOU THINK ONLY OF ONE THING AS YOUR CALLOUSED HANDS CLAW AT THE LID OF THE CASKET YOU HAVE DUG UP

MAYBE THIS IS THE BIG STRIKE! MAYBE THIS COFFIN IS LOADED WITH FAMILY JEWELS!

AT LAST IT'S OPEN! HOLLOW EYES STARE AT YOU OUT OF A BLEACHED SKULL AS IF SHOCKED AT YOUR BLASPHEMY OF THE DEAD...

BLAST THE ROTTEN LUCK! NO LOOT IN THIS BOX! NOTHIN' BUT THE GOLD FILLIN' IN THE SKELETON'S TEETH!





**SURE YOU TAKE THE GOLD FILLINGS OUT OF THE SKULL'S JAWS, ALBERT? AFTER ALL, YOU'VE GOT A REPUTATION TO LIVE UP TO... NO CONSCIENCE, NO MORALS, NO DECENCY, HEH, ALBERT?**

YEAH... AN' NO DOUGH/ I'LL NEVER MAKE MY PILE IF ALL THE STIFFS I DIG UP HAVE AS LI'L AS THIS ONE HAD/ IT DON'T EVEN PAY FOR MY DIGGIN' AN' COVERIN' UP TIME/



I BETTER GET BACK TO MY SHACK NOW! THE SUN'S STARTIN' TO COME UP... AN' I DON'T WANNA GET CAUGHT AROUND HERE.

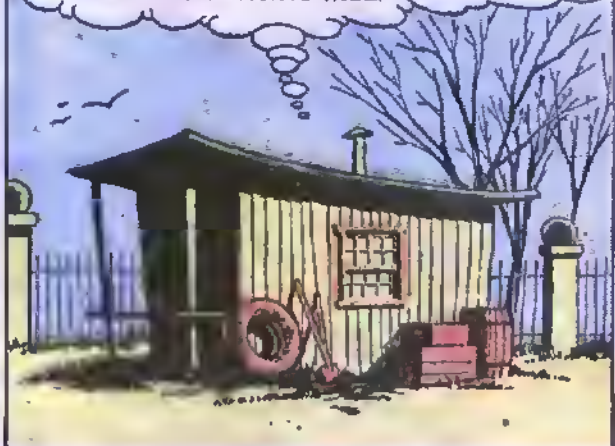


**AFTER A HARD NIGHT'S WORK YOU LIKE TO RELAX IN YOUR SHACK, DON'T YOU, ALBERT? AND YOU RELAX BY DROOLING OVER YOUR TREASURES FROM THE TOMBS...**

BRACELETS, STICKPINS, RINGS GOLD COINS... YEAH, IT ALL MAKES A NICE PILE.



BUT IT AIN'T ENOUGH... NOT FOR TEN YEARS OF DIGGIN' IT AIN'T/ I WANNA STRIKE IT RICH BEFORE I RETIRE... A CASKET LOADED WITH FAMILY JEWELS! AND I WILL, ONE OF THESE NIGHTS... I WILL!



**ANOTHER NIGHT... ANOTHER GRAVE, HUH, ALBERT? YOUR SPADE STABS INTO THE SOFT CEMETERY SOIL AND WITH EVERY SHOVELFUL YOU TRY TO IMAGINE WHAT TREASURE LIES BURIED IN THE CASKET BELOW...**

COULD BE ONE OF THOSE CRAZY OL' DAMES WHO WANTED TO BE BURIED WITH ALL HER JEWELRY!



**YOUR THOUGHTS ARE MENTAL SHOTS OF MORPHINE AND THEY FORCE YOU TO DIG WITH A FRENZY SPAWNED ONLY OF GREED...**

AH-H/ I'VE HIT THE CASKET! THIS MUST'A BEEN A FRESH GRAVE AN' THE DIGGIN' WAS EASY!



**BUT SUDDENLY SOMETHING UNUSUAL HAPPENS, DOESN'T IT, ALBERT? VERY UNUSUAL...**

HELP! THE CASKET AN' THE GRAVE CAVED IN! I—I'M FALLING... H—E—L—P!





YES, ALBERT... YOU'RE FALLING, TWISTING, SPINNING... DOWN... DOWN... DOWN! BUT ALL YOUR YELLING AND PLEADING WON'T HELP YOU / DOWN... DOWN, YOU GO, ALBERT...

OKAY, YOU CAN OPEN YOUR EYES NOW, ALBERT... AND CUT OUT THAT SCREAMING / YOU'VE STOPPED FALLING...

YEAH / I-I HAVE / BUT WHERE AM I? AN' WHO ARE THESE CHARACTERS WALKING AROUND HERE?



YOU'RE PUZZLED AND FRIGHTENED, AREN'T YOU, ALBERT? BUT WHY? THEY AREN'T BOTHERING YOU... THEY'RE NOT EVEN LOOKING AT YOU... SO WHY BE SCARED?

I--I DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS SLIMY PLACE IS... BUT I GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE. THERE MUST BE A WAY OUT!



MAYBE DOWN THIS WAY...



HOLY SMOKES / NO... NO! THEY CAN'T BE REAL... THEY CAN'T!



YOUR EYES BULGE... YOUR TEMPLES THROB AT THE SIGHT / GREED AND DESIRE REPLACE YOUR FEAR / THIS IS IT, HUH, ALBERT? THIS IS THE RICH STRIKE YOU'VE ALWAYS DREAMED OF...

CA-RI-PES / JEWELS OF ALL KINDS... / RINGS, BRACELETS, NECKLACES / YEAH / THIS IS IT ALL RIGHT / MY RICH STRIKE AT LAST!





**GREED DROPS YOU TO YOUR KNEES!  
YOU GRAB AND CLAW AT THE GEMS...  
YOU LET THE COOL GOLD METAL AND  
SPARKLING STONES RUN THRU YOUR  
FINGERS...**

**IT'S REAL! REAL GOLD, DIAMONDS AND  
EMERALDS! AN' IT'S ALL LAYIN' AROUND  
HERE LIKE TRASH! THEM CREEPS MUST  
BE CRAZY... THEY DON'T SEEM TO CARE  
ABOUT THIS STUFF AT ALL.**

**HEY, YOU!  
CAN I HAVE  
A FEW OF  
THESE?**

**TAKE ALL YOU  
OESIRE! WE  
HAVE NO USE  
FOR THEM.**

**HE DOESN'T HAVE TO TELL YOU TWICE,  
HUH, ALBERT? YOU STUFF YOUR  
POCKETS WITH SO MUCH OF THAT LOOT  
YOU CAN HARDLY MOVE...**

**NOW I GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE... AN'  
THEM CHARACTERS OUGHTTA KNOW  
HOW TO BLOW THIS JOINT. I'LL ASK  
ONE OF 'EM!**

**YES, THERE IS A WAY  
OUT... THE SAME WAY  
YOU CAME IN!**

**YOU MEAN I GOTTA CLIMB  
UP THAT SLIMY HOLE I  
FELL THRU?**

**GRAVES ARE THE ONLY  
ENTRANCES... AND THE ONLY  
EXITS! BUT WHY LEAVE?  
YOU'LL BE BACK... EVERY-  
ONE COMES HERE...  
SOONER OR LATER!**

**NOT THIS BABY! ONCE  
I SCRAM OUTTA HERE  
I'M STAYIN' OUT. AN'  
NOTHIN' CAN MAKE ME  
COME BACK!**

**IT'S A LONG WAY UP FROM  
THE BOTTON, ISN'T IT,  
ALBERT? BUT YOU DIG YOUR  
FINGERS INTO THE SLIMY  
WALLS AND START...**

**YOU SLIP AND SLIDE...  
BUT YOU CLING TO THE  
MUDDY SIDES LIKE A  
LIZARD...**

**EVERY PORE BLEEDS  
WITH SWEAT... EVERY INCH  
OF PROGRESS IS TORTURE...  
BUT YOU WON'T GIVE UP...**

**AND A THOUSAND  
AGONIES LATER, YOU SEE  
THE NIGHT... THE STARS...**

**I MADE IT!  
I'M OUT OF  
THE GRAVE!**



WHEN YOU GET BACK TO YOUR SHACK YOU'RE SO EXCITED YOU CAN'T SLEEP, CAN YOU, ALBERT? SO YOU SPEND THE NIGHT COUNTING, SORTING, ADMIRING...

YEAH... AN' AS SOON AS IT GETS LIGHT OUT AN' THE STORES OPEN ... I'M GONNA SELL THIS STUFF.

YOU'RE THE FIRST CUSTOMER AT THE JEWEL BROKER... AND AS HE STICKS THE LOUPE INTO HIS EYE AND EXAMINES YOUR JEWELRY YOU SEE A LOOK OF AMAZEMENT AND SHOCK ON HIS PALE FACE...

AMAZINGLY FINE PIECES... ALL OF THESE BRACELETS, RINGS AND NECKLACES. WHERE'D YOU ACQUIRE THEM?

NONE OF YOUR BLASTED BUSINESS! DO YOU WANNA BUY THEM OR DON'T YOU? THERE ARE OTHER BROKERS IN THIS TOWN, YA KNOW.

THAT LAST CRACK OF MINE MADE HIM QUIT STALLIN'... AN' HE GAVE ME A GOOD PRICE FOR 'EM! HA! LOOK AT THE GREEN STUFF! I'M RICH! RICH!

YEP, YOU'RE ALL SET NOW, AREN'T YOU, ALBERT? YOU'RE ROLLING IN DOUGH! NEW CLOTHES, GOOD FOOD, GIRLS... EVERYTHING YOU NEVER HAD! YOU'RE REALLY LIVING NOW!

BUT YOUR NEW LIFE IS ONLY A WEEK OLD WHEN THERE IS A KNOCK ON THE DOOR OF YOUR APARTMENT... A KNOCK THAT EXPLODES YOUR LITTLE BUBBLE...

THE POLICE!

THAT'S HIM, LIEUTENANT... THAT'S THE MAN WHO SOLD ME THE JEWELRY.

OKAY, ALBERT TORRANCE... YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!

FOR WHAT? IT AIN'T NO CRIME TO SELL JEWELRY!

IT IS WHEN IT'S STOLEN JEWELRY! THAT STUFF YOU SOLD WAS TAKEN FROM THE HOME OF MRS. FLORENCE VAN CLIVE IN A ROBBERY A WEEK AGO!



THAT'S A LIE!  
THIS IS A FRAME-  
UP/I DIDN'T  
STEAL THAT  
JEWELRY!

THEN WHERE'D  
YOU GET IT...  
WIN IT ON A  
PINBALL  
MACHINE?



GO AHEAD, ALBERT... TELL THEM!  
TELL THEM THE TRUTH! THEY'LL  
THINK YOU'RE CRAZY... BUT THAT'S  
BETTER THAN GOING TO JAIL FOR  
ROBBERY...

I... I GOT IT FROM  
A BUNCH OF  
CREEPY CHARAC-  
TERS WHO LIVE  
AT THE BOTTOM  
OF A GRAVE!

HUH? HEY, YOU  
MUST BE NUTS  
EXPECTIN' US  
TO BELIEVE A  
WEIRDIE LIKE  
THAT!



IT'S THE TRUTH, I TELL  
YA/AN' I CAN PROVE IT!  
I'LL TAKE YOU RIGHT TO  
THE SPOT WHERE I GOT  
THE STUFF!

OKAY, LET'S  
GO... THIS  
I'VE GOT TO  
SEE.

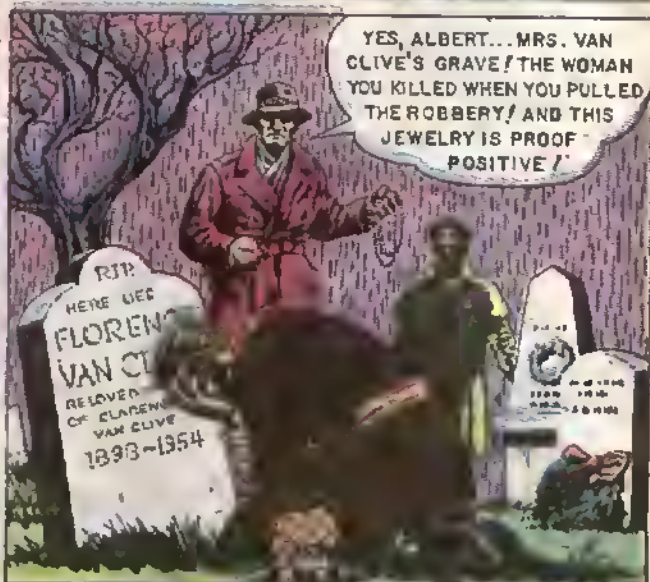


THE POLICE SIRENS SCREAM LIKE BANSHEES  
AS THEY SPEED YOU TO THE CEMETERY! AND  
WHEN YOU GET THERE, YOU RUN TOWARD THE  
PLACE WHERE YOU DUG THAT NIGHT...

THAT'S IT... RIGHT THERE! THAT'S  
WHERE I GOT THE JEWELRY FROM AND...  
HOLY SMOKES! NO... NO!



YES, ALBERT... MRS. VAN  
CLIVE'S GRAVE! THE WOMAN  
YOU KILLED WHEN YOU PULLED  
THE ROBBERY! AND THIS  
JEWELRY IS PROOF  
POSITIVE!



YOU BEG AND YOU PLEAD... BUT IT'S A WASTE OF  
BREATH, ALBERT! THE TOMBSTONES ARE STACKED  
AGAINST YOU, BUT THERE'S STILL A CHANCE... A  
LAST CHANCE! MAYBE THE JURY AT YOUR TRIAL WILL  
BELIEVE YOUR FANTASTIC STORY.

GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY...  
HAVE YOU REACHED A VERDICT?

WE... HAVE,  
YOUR HONOR.



WE, THE JURY, FIND  
ALBERT TORRANCE,  
GUILTY OF MURDER  
AS CHARGED!

NO... NO! I DIDN'T.  
KILL HER! I DIDN'T!  
I GOT THE JEWELRY  
FROM THE GRAVE I  
TELL YA... FROM  
THE GRAVE!





THAT MONTH IN THE DEATH HOUSE WAS MURDER, WASN'T IT, ALBERT? YOU'RE ALMOST GLAD TO BE WALKING THE LAST MILE...

YOU KEEP SAYING THAT ALL THE WAY TO THE CHAIR... AND EVEN AS THEY STRAP AND CAP YOU

YOU SAY IT FOR THE LAST TIME AS A SWITCH IS PULLED AND 4,000 VOLTS OF HADES BURN YOUR INSIDES...

THEN TWO MORE JOLTS, ALBERT... AND YOU'LL NEVER ROB THE DEAD AGAIN...

I GOT IT FROM THE GRAVE!

I GOT IT FROM THE GRAVE!

I... I GOT IT--- OW-W-W--- FROM THE GRAVE!

THIS IS ONE TIME, ALBERT, THAT SOMEBODY ELSE DUG A GRAVE FOR YOU...

BUT SUDDENLY, YOU'RE NOT IN THE CASKET ANYMORE, ARE YOU ALBERT?

I—I CAN'T BE DEAD! LOOK AT ME... I'M WALKIN'! I'M NOT IN A COFFIN! AN' THIS PLACE... I RECOGNIZE IT! I'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE!

SURE YOU HAVE, ALBERT! LOOK OVER THERE... REMEMBER THAT PILE OF JEWELRY? REMEMBER HOW YOU HELPED YOURSELF TO ALL YOU COULD CARRY?

AND NOW YOU KNOW WHY YOU AREN'T INTERESTED IN THE GOLD AND DIAMONDS ANYMORE, DON'T YOU ALBERT?

SURE... I REMEMBER! BUT FUNNY... I AIN'T INTERESTED IN THAT STUFF ANYMORE.

THAT IS WHERE THE SPIRITS CAST THEIR WORDLY TRINKETS WHEN THEY COME TO THIS LAND BEYOND LIFE!

YEAH... WHAT GOOD ARE GOLD AND DIAMONDS TO A GHOST?



# A Hand of FATE Mystery

#31

THE "AFFAIR OF THE BLACK ROSE" WAS A TRUE CASE OF THE SUPERNATURAL THAT TOOK PLACE IN ENGLAND WHEN KNIGHTS WERE BOLD AND FEUDS COMMON AMONG NOBLE FAMILIES. A LONG-STANDING FEUD HAD JUST COME TO AN END WHEN A CLAN CAPITULATED TO A POWERFUL BLOOD ENEMY. THE DEFEAT ENDED THE REIGN OF THE FAMILY OF THE "BLACK ROSE"

MY TERMS ARE THESE. YOU MUST VACATE THIS CASTLE AND LEAVE ENGLAND. IF NOT, YOU DIE!

I HAVE NO CHOICE. BUT, SIR WILLIAM, THE "BLACK ROSE" WILL AVENGE ME! A REVENGE OF DEATH ON YOUR FAMILY!

SIR WILLIAM BECAME MASTER OF THE "BLACK ROSE" CASTLE, SO NAMED FOR THE PHENOMENAL ROSE THAT GREW ALONG SIDE THE CASTLE WALL

AAH! THIS DEVILISH PLANT TEARS AT MY CLOTHES! PERHAPS THE CURSE OF THE BLACK ROSE HAS MEANING...

SIR WILLIAM HAD THE GROUNDS COVERED WITH GRAVEL AND THE BLACK ROSE DESTROYED TO PREVENT THE CURSE FROM COMING TRUE. IN TIME THE CURSE WAS FORGOTTEN. BUT CENTURIES LATER, AN ANCESTOR OF SIR WILLIAM BECAME HEIR TO THE CASTLE...

CLEAR THIS GRAVEL AND SEED THE GROUNDS! I WANT GRASS AND FLOWERS TO GROW HERE AGAIN!

SOON THE AREA WAS GREEN EXCEPT FOR A HUGE BLACK ROSE THAT HAD MYSTERIOUSLY BLOOMED...

STRANGE! THIS BLACK ROSE... I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT! ITS THORNS ARE AS SHARP AS BLADES!

THAT NIGHT, SIR WILLIAM'S DESCENDANT WAS AWAKENED BY A HORRIBLE SIGHT COMING THROUGH HIS BEDROOM WINDOW

WHA...? THE BLACK ROSE! IT'S ALIVE! CREEPING TOWARDS ME...! AAAAAHHH!

THE SCREAMS BROUGHT SERVANTS TO THE BEDROOM WHERE THEY FOUND THEIR MASTER WITH THE SINEWY TENTACLES OF THE BLACK ROSE WRAPPED AROUND HIM. THE SHARP THORNS HAD PIERCED HIS BODY LIKE A THOUSAND KNIVES! THE ROSE ITSELF HAD BECOME A MASS OF WITHERED PETALS, ITS TASK OF CENTURIES-OLD CURSE COMPLETED.

THE END



# SHATTERING THE TIME BARRIER

"A!!! THEY'RE THE GHOSTS OF THE CRIMINALS I'VE EXECUTED...! THEY'VE COME BACK FOR REVENGE!"



TIME AND AGAIN YOU HAVE SEEN IN THESE PAGES HOW THE HAND OF FATE GUIDES EVIL MEN TO THEIR INESCAPABLE DOOM, BUT SOMETIMES RIGHTEOUS MEN LET THEIR HATRED OF EVIL BLIND THEM TO THEIR OWN DIABOLICAL DEEDS, WHICH THEY COMMIT IN THE NAME OF HUMANITY. SUCH MEN CAN BECOME AN EVEN GREATER MENACE THAN THE WORST CRIMINAL... AND THEREFORE REQUIRE THE SPECIAL ATTENTION OF FATE...

THE CASE OF PHILIP SPAYNE, EXECUTIONER, AT THE STATE PRISON DEATH HOUSE...

AFTER THE ELECTRICITY HAD TAKEN ITS TOLL...

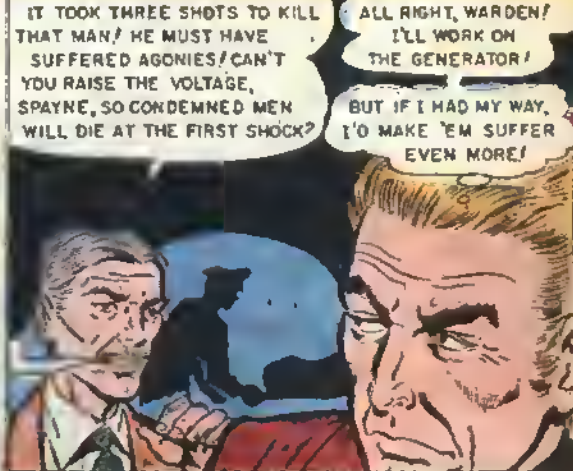
IT TOOK THREE SHOTS TO KILL THAT MAN! HE MUST HAVE SUFFERED AGONIES! CAN'T YOU RAISE THE VOLTAGE, SPAYNE, SO CONDEMNED MEN WILL DIE AT THE FIRST SHOCK?

ALL RIGHT, WARDEN! I'LL WORK ON THE GENERATOR!

BUT IF I HAD MY WAY, I'D MAKE 'EM SUFFER EVEN MORE!

YAAAGHH!

DIE, YOU ROTTEN MURDERER... DIE! I'M GLAD I'M THE ONE WHO'S SENDING THE JUICE THROUGH THAT VICIOUS BRAIN OF YOURS!





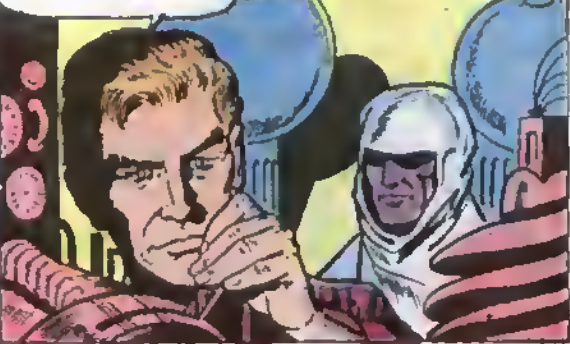
A LOT OF CRIMINALS ARE TOO CUNNING TO BE CAUGHT/ WHEN WE CATCH BAD ONES, THEY SHOULD BE TORTURED TO DEATH AS AN EXAMPLE TO OTHERS!

BEHOLD, HOW LITTLE THINGS AFFECT THE DESTINIES OF MEN!



IF PHILIP SPAYNE HAD NOT BEEN SO ABSORBED IN HIS THOUGHTS, HE WOULD NOT HAVE ABSENT-MINDEDLY CONNECTED SOME WIRES IN AN UNUSUAL WAY. . .

BUT I'VE GOT TO FOLLOW THE WARDEN'S ORDERS/ WELL, LET'S SEE HOW MUCH I'VE STEPPED UP THE VOLTAGE. . .



WHA---/ I MUST'VE DONE SOMETHING WRONG/ THE CURRENT SHOULDN'T HAVE JUMPED AN ARC LIKE THAT!



I-I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! THERE SEEMS TO BE A STRANGE NEW WORLD ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THOSE ARCS/ AND GREAT SCOTT.../ THERE'S THAT CRIMINAL I ELECTROCUTED AN HOUR AGO---FOLLOWED BY A GANG OF OTHER EXECUTED KILLERS!



HE--HE'S BECOMING TRANSPARENT... TURNING INTO A GHOST!

YOU ELECTROCUTED ME/ NOW I GET MY REVENGE... BY EXECUTING YOU!



YOU'LL NEVER GET ME, YOU FIEND! AAHH/ THAT WRENCH WENT RIGHT THROUGH HIS BODY!

NOTHING YOU CAN DO WILL STOP ME/ BUT THIS LENGTH OF WIRE WILL FINISH YOU... WHEN I WRAP IT AROUND YOUR NECK!







THEY'VE DISAPPEARED! BUT NOW I KNOW HOW TO GET RID OF THEM—BY TURNING THE CURRENT OFF! SO I'LL JUST TURN IT ON AGAIN AND TRY TO FIND OUT WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!

TAKE HEED, MORTAL! DISCONNECT YOUR WIRING—FORGET THAT ALL THIS EVER HAPPENED!

IT IS DANGEROUS TO DELVE INTO SUCH SECRETS... NOT BECAUSE YOU ARE EVIL, BUT BECAUSE YOU ARE SO FANATICAL ABOUT YOUR OWN IDEAS OF RIGHTEDUSNESS!

IF YOU'RE TRYING TO STOP ME, YOU MUST BE A CREATURE OF EVIL! I DON'T TAKE ADVICE FROM THE LIKES OF YOU!

AND SPAYNE THREW THE SWITCH...

AH, THE CURRENT JUMPED THE ARCS AGAIN... BUT THERE'S A BATTLE GOING ON IN THAT WEIRD WORLD NOW!

STAND FAST, BROTHERS! DO NOT LET THE EVIL ONES INVADE THE WORLD OF THE LIVING!



THOSE CRIMINALS SEEM TO BE WINNING... AND I CAN'T STAND BY AND WATCH THAT HAPPEN!



I'VE GOT TO FIGHT EVIL, NO MATTER WHERE IT TAKES PLACE! BUT THOSE HIGH-VOLTAGE ARCS MUSTN'T TOUCH MY BODY, OR I'LL BE ELECTROCUTED INSTANTLY!



AHH! THE EVIL ONES HAVE BROKEN THROUGH OUR LINES!

PHILIP SPAYNE DID NOT STOP TO EXPLORE THE STRANGE WORLD HE FOUND HIMSELF IN. DRIVEN BY HATRED OF ALL THINGS EVIL, HE PICKED UP A CLUB AND RUSHED INTO THE FRAY...



WHAT'S HOLDING YOU GUYS UP? LET'S GET TO THE WORLD OF THE LIVING AND GO ON A RAMPAGE OF MURDER!

THIS GHOST'S STOPPIN' US... AGHH!



A GHOST! RUN FOR LIVES!



HUH? ME—A GHOST?

HOLY JUMP—I-I'M TRANSPARENT...! I AM GHOSTLIKE!

I CAN EXPLAIN THAT, MY FRIEND.



THIS IS THE WORLD OF THE DEAD! THE LIVING APPEAR AS GHOSTS HERE...JUST AS WE DEAD APPEAR AS SPIRITS IN YOUR WORLD! ORDINARILY, THE TWO WORLDS ARE ON DIFFERENT LEVELS, BUT SOMETHING APPARENTLY HAPPENED TO BRING THE TWO LEVELS INTO ALIGNMENT.



...SO NOW THE LIVING AND THE DEAD CAN ENTER EACH OTHER'S WORLD BY STEPPING BETWEEN THOSE FLAMING ARCS!

I GET IT! I MUST'VE ACCIDENTALLY HOOKED UP MY WIRES IN A NEW WAY, AND THE NEW FORCE FIELD MADE THE TWO WORLDS INTERSECT AT THE ARCS!





BUT TELL ME---  
WHAT WAS THAT  
BATTLE ABOUT?

WE'RE THE  
SPIRITS OF  
SETTLERS WHO  
DIED HERE BEFORE  
THE PRISON WAS  
BUILT... AND EVER  
SINCE THE EXECUTION  
OF CRIMINALS BEGAN  
IN THE PRISON, THEIR  
SPIRITS HAVE BEEN  
ATTACKING US, SLOWLY  
WIPING US OUT!

BUT WE'VE KEPT TRYING TO KEEP  
THE EVIL ONES OUT OF THE WORLD  
OF THE LIVING; BECAUSE THEY'D  
BE INVULNERABLE  
THERE--JUST AS YOU  
ARE BOOILESS AND  
INVULNERABLE  
HERE! NOW YOU  
CAN HELP US--

NO, I'VE GOT  
A BETTER  
IDEA! I'M  
GOING BACK TO  
MY WORLD...  
WITH THOSE  
GHOSTLY  
CRIMINALS!

NO---STAY  
HERE AND  
HELP US  
DESTROY  
THE  
CRIMINALS!

DO NOT EMBARK ON  
YOUR MAD PLAN,  
PHILIP SPAYNE...OR  
YOU ARE DOOMED!

OUT OF MY WAY!  
NOBODY'S  
STOPPING ME!

PHILIP SPAYNE  
COULD NOT BE  
REASONED WITH! HE  
SEARCHED UNTIL HE  
FOUND THE HEAD-  
QUARTERS OF THE  
CRIMINALS IN THE  
WORLD OF THE DEAD...

DON'T BE AFRAID! I WON'T HARM  
YOU--IF YOU DO AS I SAY! COME  
BACK TO THE WORLD OF THE  
LIVING WITH ME... AND KILL ALL  
THOSE THAT SHOULD DIE!

SURE--SURE WE'LL  
DO ANYTHING  
YOU SAY... BOSS!

IF YOU DON'T OBEY ME, I'LL TURN  
OFF THE CURRENT WHILE YOU'RE IN  
THE WORLD OF THE LIVING...  
AND YOU'LL DISINTEGRATE LIKE  
THE GHOSTS WHO TRIED TO KILL  
ME BEFORE!

DON'T WORRY, BOSS!  
YOU NAME WHO YOU  
WANT KILLED! THAT'S  
THE KIND OF WORK  
WE ENJOY!

SOON AFTERWARDS...

THERE, THERE'S THE NAMES  
OF THE WORST RACKETEERS,  
CRIMINALS AND DICTATORS IN THE  
WORLD... ALL WHO'VE ESCAPED  
JUSTICE UNTIL NOW!

OKAY, BOYS, HERE'S A  
LIST OF ALL THOSE I  
WANT MURDERED!



AND SO THE GHOSTLY HORDE SPREAD THROUGH THE WORLD ON ITS MISSION OF MURDER, OBEYING THE ORDERS OF A FANATIC WHOSE METHODS WERE THOSE OF THE VERY CRIMINALS AND DICTATORS HE WANTED TO DESTROY!



WHA---  
YOU  
AGAIN!

BEWARE, PHILIP  
SPAYNE! YOUR  
MOTIVES ARE  
GOOD, BUT YOUR  
METHODS ARE EVIL!  
YOU ARE TAKING HUMAN  
LIVES INTO YOUR OWN  
HANDS, CONDEMNING  
PEOPLE TO DEATH  
WITHOUT TRIAL...



... BEWARE  
LEST YOU  
PERISH  
THROUGH  
YOUR OWN  
POWER-MAO  
ARROGANCE!

NO THREATS CAN  
SCARE ME! I'M  
GOING TO RIDE THE  
WORLD OF EVIL! I'M  
GOING BACK NOW  
TO THE DEAD FOR  
MORE CRIMINALS  
TO CARRY OUT  
MY ORDERS!



IN THE  
WORLD OF THE  
DEAD  
SPAYNE WAS  
TO HAVE  
ANOTHER  
CHANCE TO  
SAVE HIMSELF  
BY HEEDING  
THE CALL OF  
HIS HEART...

OH, HOW I'VE BEEN WAITING  
FOR YOU TO COME BACK / STAY.  
HERE AND HELP US FIGHT THE  
EVIL DEAD! I'VE FALLEN IN  
LOVE WITH YOU... I PROMISE  
TO MAKE YOU HAPPY!

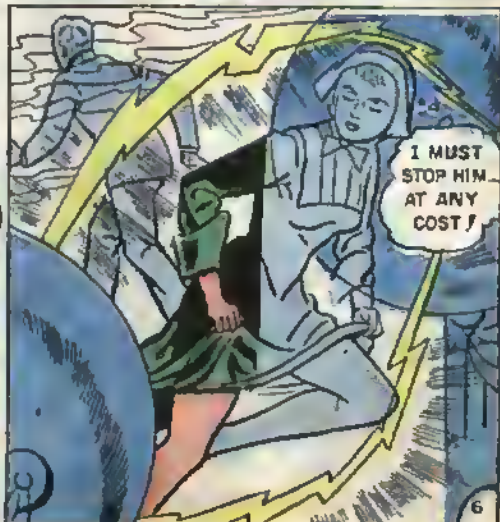
YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL...  
BUT I CAN'T LET  
LOVE INTERFERE  
WITH MY MISSION!



SPAYNE  
THEN  
TOLD  
THE  
GIRL  
HOW HE  
WAS  
FIGHTING  
EVIL  
IN THE  
WORLD OF  
THE  
LIVING...  
AND  
SHE  
DREW  
AWAY  
IN  
HORROR  
...

BUT YOU—YOU'RE SETTING YOURSELF UP AS  
PROSECUTOR, JUDGE AND EXECUTIONER OF THE  
WHOLE HUMAN RACE! AND THAT'S EVIL! AT  
LEAST HERE WE'RE FIGHTING MEN WHO'VE  
BEEN LEGALLY CONVICTED AND  
EXECUTED FOR THEIR  
CRIMES!

YOU'RE  
AGAINST ME  
TOO! BUT EVEN  
THAT WON'T STOP ME!



I MUST  
STOP HIM  
AT ANY  
COST!



WHEN PHILIP SPAYNE RETURNED  
WITH A NEW BAND OF GHOSTLY  
RECRUITS...

HERE'S A LIST OF MORE PEOPLE  
I WANT KILLED! I'VE RUN OUT OF  
KNOWN CRIMINALS AND DICTATORS,  
SO HERE'S A LIST OF PEOPLE WHO  
MIGHT GO BAD! THE WORLD WILL  
BE BETTER OFF WITHOUT THEM!

POWER HAS MADE A  
TYRANT OF HIM!

AFTER THE GHOSTS LEFT ON THEIR  
MURDEROUS ASSIGNMENTS...

I'LL WIPE OUT  
ALL THOSE WHO  
OPPOSE MY  
PLANS TO  
IMPROVE THE  
WORLD!

HOW CAN I STOP HIM?  
WAIT... I HAVE SEEN  
HIM STEP CAREFULLY  
OVER THAT LOWER  
ARC OF FIRE. WILL IT  
STUN HIM AND  
RESTORE HIM TO HIS  
SENSES IF I PUSH  
HIM INTO IT?

WHA--  
HELP!



IN DEATH AS IN  
LIFE, PHILIP  
SPAYNE DESTROYED  
WHATEVER HE  
TOUCHED... FOR  
HIS FALL DEMOL-  
ISHED THE WIRING  
HOOKUP THAT HAD  
LED HIM TO HIS  
FATE! AND AS THE  
DOORWAY TO THE  
WORLD OF THE DEAD  
VANISHED...

FORGIVE ME,  
MY LOVE... WHAT-  
EVER I DID WAS  
FOR YOUR OWN GOOD  
...AND THE WORLD'S  
AND NOW I-I  
PERISH WITH  
YOU...

...SO, TOO,  
VANISHED  
THE HORDES  
OF GHOSTLY  
CRIMINALS  
IN THE  
MIDST OF  
THEIR DEADLY  
TASKS!

AIIIEE!

WE'LL NEVER KNOW HOW  
THE ACCIDENT HAPPENED...  
WE COULDN'T POSSIBLY  
RECONSTRUCT IT FROM  
THAT MASS OF BURNED  
TWISTED WIRING!

PHILIP SPAYNE,  
EXECUTIONER...  
ELECTROCUTED  
BY HIS OWN HAND!  
WHAT AN IRONIC FATE!

THE END



# A Hand of FATE Mystery

#32

IN THE FILES OF THE PARIS POLICE THERE CAN BE FOUND A CASE HISTORY OF A CRIME THAT OCCURRED OVER THIRTY YEARS AGO. TO THIS DAY AN ALMA OF THE SUPERNATURAL STILL HANGS OVER IT. IN THE HOME OF A WEALTHY FAMILY, A MASQUERADE BALL WAS IN PROGRESS AS A SPURNED SUITOR OF THE HOSTESS PLOTTED MANIACALLY IN A DARK CORNER. JEAN PILLOT WAS PLANNING MURDER.

JULIA HAS GIVEN ME UP FOR ANOTHER MAN. SHE MUST DIE! MY PLAN IS PERFECT. NO ONE RECOGNIZES ME IN THIS COSTUME AND I AM SUPPOSED TO BE IN ROUEN TONIGHT! FITTING DISGUISE FOR A PERFECT CRIME!



SUDDENLY THE HALL WAS PLUNGED INTO DARKNESS. ABOVE THE STARTLED SHOUTS OF THE GUESTS CAME JULIA'S ANGUISHED SHRIEK! WHEN THE LIGHTS CAME ON AGAIN.



JULIA! SHE'S BEEN STABBED!

SHE'S DEAD!

STOP THAT MAN! HE IS THE KILLER!

PILLOT WAS CAPTURED, BUT WHEN THEY TRIED REMOVE HIS SATANIC MAKEUP.

T-THE HORNS...! THEY WILL NOT COME OFF! THEY'RE REAL!

THESE FEATURES--ARE HIS! HE IS REALLY SATAN!

WHIA...? THIS IS BUT A DISGUISE! I AM JEAN PILLOT!



UNABLE TO REMOVE THE HEINOUS FEATURES FROM HIS FACE, PILLOT BECAME TERROR-STRICKEN. HE RAN MADLY FROM THE HALL AND PLUNGED OUT OF A WINDOW FOUR STORIES OFF THE GROUND.



PILLOT'S BODY LANDED ON A SPIKED FENCE AND HE WAS MORTALLY IMPALED.



THE POLICE -- CALL THE POLICE!

WHEN THE AUTHORITIES ARRIVED THEY WERE ASTONISHED TO FIND THE FIGURE OF THE DEVIL HANGING ON A SPIKE. MEDICAL SCIENCE COULD NOT EXPLAIN THE MACABRE TRANSFORMATION THAT OVERCAME JEAN PILLOT! THE BODY WAS CREMATED AND THE CASE FILED IN THE ANNALS OF THE UNEXPLAINABLE.

THE END



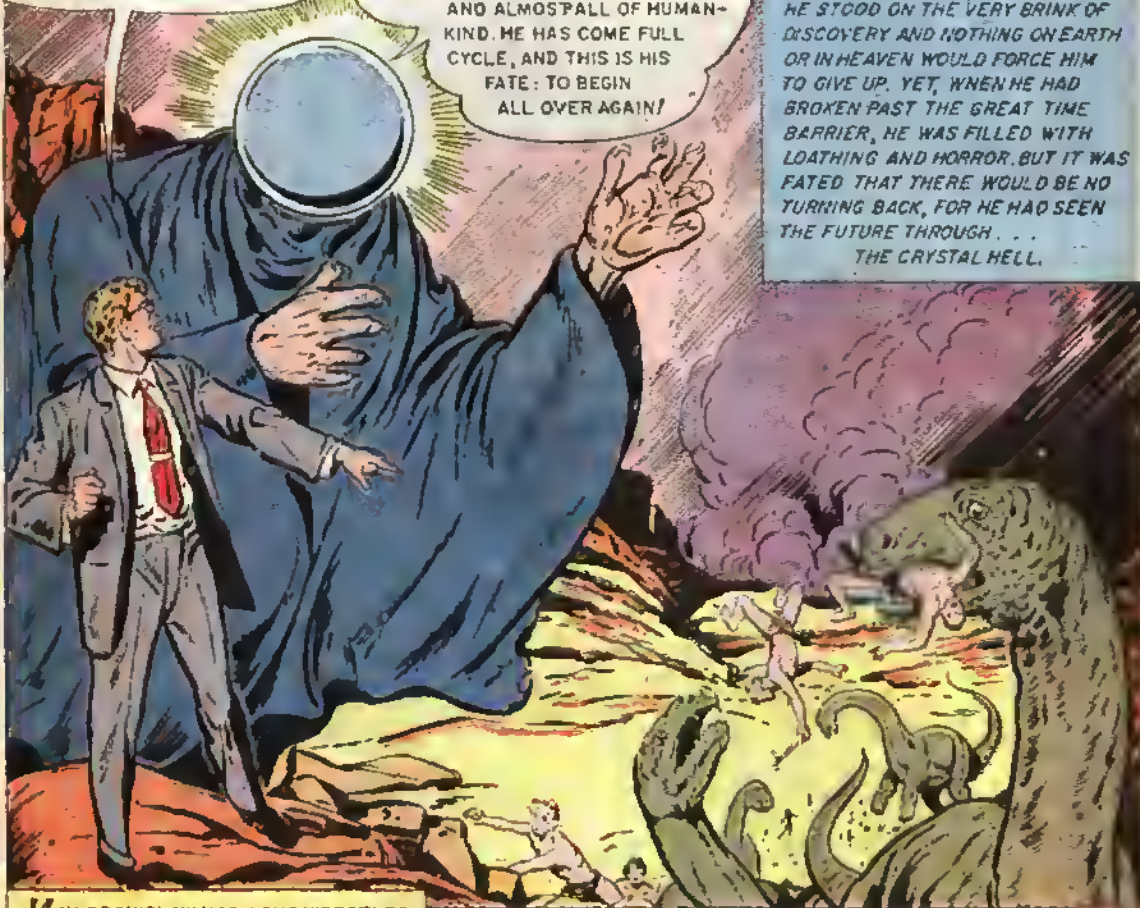
# HELL beyond the Crystal ball

YOU LIED TO ME! THIS ISN'T THE FUTURE! THESE ARE PRIMITIVE TIMES! THOSE ANIMALS, THOSE MEN—THEY BELONG TO THE STONE AGE!

THIS IS THE FUTURE, MAX BRONISLAW! THE FUTURE FIFTY THOUSAND YEARS HENCE! THROUGH HIS OWN STUPIDITY, MAN DESTROYED THE GREAT WORKS HE HAD CREATED, AND ALMOSPALL OF HUMAN-KIND. HE HAS COME FULL CYCLE, AND THIS IS HIS FATE: TO BEGIN ALL OVER AGAIN!

FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL MAN HAS TRIED IN VAIN TO PIERCE THE FUTURE. BUT MAX BRONISLAW, WORLD RENOWNED CYBERNETIC GENIUS, WOULD NOT ACCEPT DEFEAT. HE STOOD ON THE VERY BRINK OF DISCOVERY AND NOTHING ON EARTH OR IN HEAVEN WOULD FORCE HIM TO GIVE UP. YET, WHEN HE HAD BROKEN PAST THE GREAT TIME BARRIER, HE WAS FILLED WITH LOATHING AND HORROR. BUT IT WAS FATED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO TURNING BACK, FOR HE HAD SEEN THE FUTURE THROUGH...

THE CRYSTAL HELL.



MAX BRONISLAW HAD LONG WRESTLED IN VAIN WITH THE PROBLEM OF PENETRATING THE FUTURE. ONE DAY WHEN HE THOUGHT HE HAD THE PROBLEM OF THE TIME BARRIER LICKED...

THIS IS CERTAINLY THE GREATEST MECHANICAL BRAIN EVER MADE. HOW DO YOU INTEND TO TEST IT?

WITH THIS FORMULA, DR. SIMMONS! WHEN FED INTO THE MACHINE, IT SHOULD GIVE US A PICTURE OF THE WORLD TWO THOUSAND YEARS FROM NOW!

DIALS WERE TURNED, SWITCHES THROWN AS THE FORMULA WAS FED INTO THE MACHINE...

MAX, LOOK! THE MACHINE REJECTS YOUR FORMULA! IT CAN'T BE DONE!

NO, GIVE IT A CHANCE! IT NEEDS MORE TIME FOR CALCULATIONS!





BUT THE MECHANICAL BRAIN HAD TRIED ITS UTMOST, AND WHEN PUSHED TO ITS LIMIT...

YOU'VE OVERTAXED IT, MAX, LOOK OUT!

AAARRH,  
I'VE FAILED,  
FAILED! FIVE  
YEARS OF WORK  
WASTED ON THIS  
STUPID MACHINE.



MAX, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THAT HAMMER?

I'VE WASTED A WHOLE LIFE-TIME PLAYING WITH TOYS, AND I HAVEN'T ACHIEVED MY DREAM! I HATE EVERY ONE I EVER INVENTED. BEFORE I LEAVE HERE I'LL MAKE JUNK OUT OF THEM!



MAX'S RAGE WAS TOO GREAT TO STOP...

NO, YOU MUSTN'T! NOBODY CAN REBUILD THEM! YOU'RE PUTTING SCIENCE BACK TWENTY YEARS!

THAT'S NOT MY CONCERN! SCIENCE WILL GET ALONG WITHOUT THEM! DON'T TRY TO STOP ME!



NOT UNTIL EVERY MACHINE HAD BEEN DESTROYED DID MAX LEAVE THE LABORATORY FOR HIS HOME...

HOW STUPID I WAS TO ATTEMPT THE IMPOSSIBLE! TO GLIMPSE THE FUTURE THROUGH A FORMULA. YET THERE MUST BE ANOTHER WAY—NOT THROUGH AN EQUATION FIT ONLY FOR THE FIRE!



SUDDENLY AS FLAMES CAUGHT THE PAPER...

WHA...? THE FLAMES ARE SHOOTING RIGHT OUT OF THE FIREPLACE! THE WHOLE ROOM WILL CATCH FIRE!



BUT MAX WAS EVEN MORE STARTLED BY THE FLAMES' TRANSFORMATION.

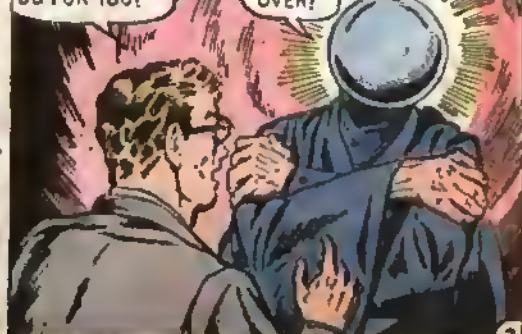
WHO—WHAT ARE YOU?

HAVE NO FEAR, MAX BRONISLAW! YES, YOU ARE WELL KNOWN TO ME! IT WAS YOUR FORMULA WHICH SUMMONED NATAS FROM THE WORLD OF THE FLAMES TO PUT HIM COMPLETELY IN YOUR POWER! YOU MAY HAVE ANY WISH YOU WANT.



YOU CERTAINLY LOOK LIKE AN UNEARTHLY CREATURE! TELL ME, ARE THERE NO RESTRICTIONS? CAN I HAVE ANY WISH I WANT? IS THERE ANYTHING I MUST DO FOR YOU?

NOTHING! I AM HERE TO SERVE YOU, PROVIDED WHAT YOU CHOSE BRINGS FULFILLMENT. IF YOU DON'T ACHIEVE HAPPINESS, WELL... THEN I'M RELEASED AND YOU MUST DO AS I SAY! DON'T RUSH! THINK IT OVER!





**A SILENT WITNESS ASSESSED THE MORTAL DANGER BUT COULD NEITHER WARN NOR COUNSEL...**

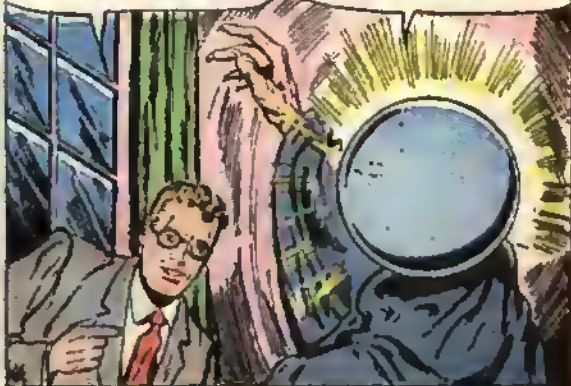
I CAN'T LOSE! MY GREATEST HAPPINESS LIES IN THE FUTURE! IF NATAS GRANTS MY WISH, I'LL NEVER REGRET IT! YES, YES, I'LL DO IT!

THINK, MAX BRONISLAW! NO MAN HAS BEEN AFFORDED SIGHT OF THE FUTURE! THERE ARE GOOD REASONS FOR THIS!



I HAVE DECIDED, NATAS, AND ACCEPT THE TERMS OF YOUR BARGAIN. I WANT TO SEE THE FUTURE... YES, THE PERFECT BEAUTY OF THE FUTURE!

VERY WELL, THEN. THE BARGAIN MUST BE SEALED IN BLOOD. HOLD UP YOUR ARM! COME CLOSER! THE WORLD OF THE FUTURE AWAITS YOU!



**NOW THERE IS NO TURNING BACK! TO PEER INTO WHAT IS NOT PERMITTED ANY MORTAL, IS TO INVITE DISASTER!**



NOW STARE INTO THE CRYSTAL! CONCENTRATE... AND SOON THE FUTURE YOU HAVE CHOSEN WILL MATERIALIZE!

MY HEAD! I'M BEGINNING TO GET DIZZY! THE CRYSTAL IS GETTING LARGER AND LARGER!



**THROUGH THE ENVELOPING MIST MAX SAW THE MURKY OUTLINES OF A NEW WORLD...**

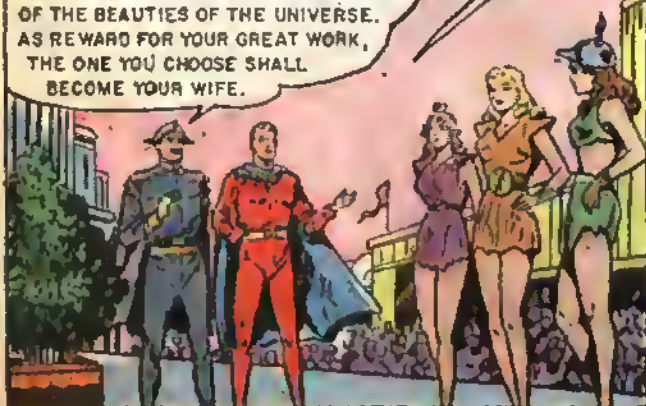
WHERE AM I? IF ONLY THIS HAZE WOULD CLEAR! AAAH... NOW I CAN SEE! JUST AHEAD! IT IS A FUTURE WORLD!



**HE CAME TO FULL CONSCIOUSNESS AMID CHEERS AND DAZZLING BEAUTY...**

MAX BRONISLAW, AS MATHEMATICAL GENIUS OF THE FIRST ORDER, YOU HAVE BEEN CHOSEN TO JUDGE THIS CONTEST OF THE BEAUTIES OF THE UNIVERSE. AS REWARD FOR YOUR GREAT WORK, THE ONE YOU CHOOSE SHALL BECOME YOUR WIFE.

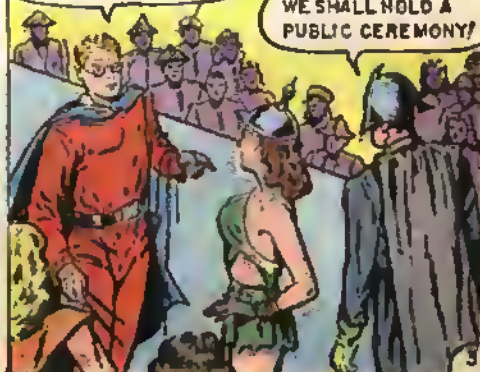
I CAN SEE THAT A DECISION WILL BE DIFFICULT!



**AFTER LONG STUDY, MEASUREMENT AND CONTEMPLATION...**

THIS ONE STANDS OUT IN ALL RESPECTS! I CHOOSE HER, FOR SHE EXEMPLIFIES PERFECT BEAUTY!

YOU HAVE MADE AN EXCELLENT CHOICE! AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH OUR CUSTOM WE SHALL HOLD A PUBLIC CEREMONY!





SO MAX WAS MARRIED IN THE YEAR 3310 TO THE PERFECT BEAUTY, MISS UNIVERSE.

SO BY THE POWERS OF THE WORLD STATE INVESTED IN ME, I PRONOUNCE YOU MAN AND WIFE!

RAY!  
HURRAH!  
HURRAH!

SEVERAL DAYS LATER, MAX BEGAN TO LEARN THAT BEAUTY WAS ONLY SKIN DEEP...

WHAT KIND OF MEAL IS THIS? EVERYTHING IS BURNED AND TASTELESS! HAVEN'T YOU EVER LEARNED TO COOK?

NO, DEAR!

DO YOU CALL YOURSELF THE IDEAL WIFE FOR A GREAT SCIENTIST? THERE ISN'T A SINGLE THING I CAN SPEAK TO YOU ABOUT. A WEEK HAS PASSED AND I HAVEN'T GOTTEN A SINGLE THOUGHT OUT OF THAT BIRD BRAIN OF YOURS!

YES, DEAR!

YES, DEAR! NO, DEAR! YES, DEAR! I'LL GO MAD! I'LL THROTTLE YOU IF I HEAR IT ONCE MORE! FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, ISN'T THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU CAN SAY?

NO, DEAR!

IN MADDED FURY, MAX FLUNG HIS THING OF BEAUTY TO THE GROUND WITH VIOLENT FORCE...

AARRRH! IT ISN'T A WOMAN I MARRIED, BUT A THING, A ROBOT! NO, NO, THIS ISN'T WHAT I WANTED! NATAS DECEIVED ME!

YES, DEAR! NO, DEAR! YES, DEAR! NO, DEAR! YES, DEAR!

AND AS THE WORDS OF DISCONTENT AND BITTERNESS LEFT HIS LIPS...

NATAS! YOU TRICKED ME...! IT WAS A HOAX, A MIRAGE!

NO, YOU DECEIVED YOURSELF! YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT PERFECTION DOES NOT EXIST IN NATURE! PERFECT BEAUTY IS MAN-MADE!

YOU NOW HAVE TWO CHOICES LEFT IN THE WORLD OF THE FUTURE! WHAT SHALL IT BE, BRONISLAW? OR ARE YOU ALREADY RESIGNED TO DEFEAT?

DEFEAT, NO! I MADE A WRONG CHOICE. THE FUTURE WILL TRAFFIC IN POWER! YES, GIVE ME A POSITION OF GREAT POWER IN THE WORLD OF TOMORROW!

A CHOICE AS STUPID AS THE FIRST ONE! THE CARDS OF THE EVIL ONE ARE MARKED, AND ONLY HE CAN WIN!



AGAIN THE CENTURIES SPEED BY IN A SWIRLING MIST AND AS THE HAZE SLOWLY CLEARED...

YOUR WISH IS GRANTED! COMMANDER BRONISLAW, YOU ARE IN GARRISON B, ON GUAM, DEFENSE CENTER OF THE PACIFIC. THE YEAR IS 5731.



THOSE BOMBS ARE GETTING TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT! EVEN TWO HUNDRED FEET UNDER ROCK IS NO PROTECTION! WHAT'S THE LATEST FROM THE ENEMY?

ENEMY GARRISON A HAS FALLEN, COMMANDER! NO FURTHER COMMUNICATIONS, SIR!

ENEMY GARRISON B AND C ARE DEAD...! NO REPORT, COMMANDER!



AND HOURS LATER...

BOMBS HAVE DESTROYED ALL ENEMY INSTALLATIONS! WE'VE RECEIVED NO ANSWER TO PEACE DEMANDS FROM THEM AND OUR OWN FORCES ARE SILENT! WHAT DOES IT MEAN, SIR!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN? YOU IDIOTS... IT MEANS VICTORY, COMPLETE VICTORY, AND WE ALONE HAVE SURVIVED! LOCK THE CONTROL BOARDS. IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE!



ONE BY ONE, HIS STAFF TURNED, UNTIL MAX UNDERSTOOD THE NATURE OF HIS HOLLOW VICTORY...

CELEBRATE, SIR? REMEMBER, WE CAN'T LEAVE! THE AIR IS DEADLY WITH RADIATION!

WE ARE THE ONLY ONES LEFT, SIR!

AAAAARRRH...! MECHANISMS NOT MEN! THEN I'M DOOMED TO LIVE OUT MY LIFE WITH MACHINES! I'M CAUGHT LIKE A RAT IN A TRAP! NO, NO! I'D RATHER DIE!



BUT DEATH WOULD NOT COME SO READILY... THERE WAS STILL NATAS TO CONSIDER...

WILL THE FUTURE ALWAYS BE MECHANISTIC AND DESTRUCTIVE? IS THERE NO DISTANT AGE WHERE I CAN FIND HAPPINESS?

YOU STILL HAVE ANOTHER CHOICE, BRONISLAW! PERHAPS THE LAST ONE WILL FULFILL ALL YOUR DESIRES!



THEN TRANSPORT ME TO AN AGE WHERE ALL WARS HAVE CEASED AND MAN HAS GROWN SIMPLE AGAIN. AN ERA OF PEACE!

IT SHALL BE DONE. GAZE WITHOUT FEAR INTO THE CRYSTAL OF THE FUTURE!

FOR BRONISLAW THERE WILL BE NO PEACE IN ANY AGE, EVEN IN ETERNITY!



BEHOLD THE FUTURE, MAX BRONISLAW!

I—I SEE A WORLD OF UTTER PRIMITIVENESS... NO CITIES, NO MACHINES. ALL THESE HAVE DIED. WHY, IT'S LIKE THE ANCIENT WORLD OF THE PAST!





*THE FUTURE HAD COME FULL CYCLE AND MERGED WITH THE PAST. WHAT WAS LEFT OF MAN WAS BEGINNING THE LONG CLIMB TO CIVILIZATION AGAIN...*

COME, THIS IS A FRESH TRACK! WE WILL SOON HAVE MEAT!

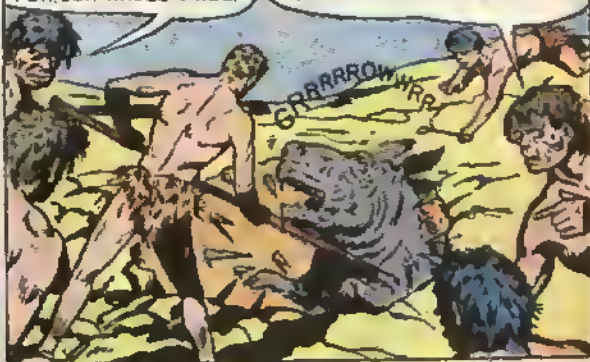
SEE, I TELL YOU, THERE IS A DEVIL IN HIM! WHY CAN HE ALWAYS FIND MEAT WHEN WE CAN'T!



*IT WAS MAX'S FULLY DEVELOPED BRAIN THAT MADE HIM MORE THAN A MATCH FOR FEROCIOUS BEASTS...*

WHY DIDN'T WE THINK OF THAT! ALONE, HE HAS KILLED ENOUGH MEAT FOR OUR WHOLE TRIBE!

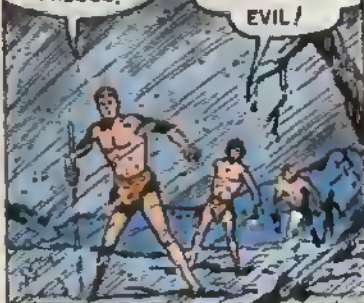
HE MUST BE THE SON OF THE FOREST DEMON! WE MUST BE CAREFUL OR HE WILL KILL US LIKE THAT WILD BEAST!



*SUSPICION HUNG ON EACH MIRACLE MAX ACCOMPLISHED, AS THE PRIMITIVE GROUP PLODDED HOME THROUGH THE SNOW STORM...*

IT IS THIS WAY TO THE CAVE! I REMEMBER THOSE TREES AND MARKERS. HURRY, BEFORE WE FREEZE!

ONLY A DEMON COULD LEAD US THROUGH THIS STORM. I TOLD YOU WHEN THIS STRANGER CAME HE WAS EVIL!



*ONCE IN THEIR CAVE, MAX'S STRANGE BEHAVIOR WAS WATCHED WITH OPEN HOSTILITY...*

WE DON'T HAVE TO BE COLO! A FIRE WILL SOON WARM THE CAVE!

FIRE? HE SPEAKS A DIFFERENT TONGUE! WATCH WHAT HE DOES! HE STRIKES ROCKS TOGETHER. YES THE WORK OF DEMONS!



THERE IS NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF! COME HERE! THE FIRE WILL WARM YOUR BONES!

NO! NO! HEVER! I TOLD YOU HE WAS A DEVIL! HE MAKES DANCING LIGHT COME OUT OF LEAVES AND WOOD! I SAY KILL!



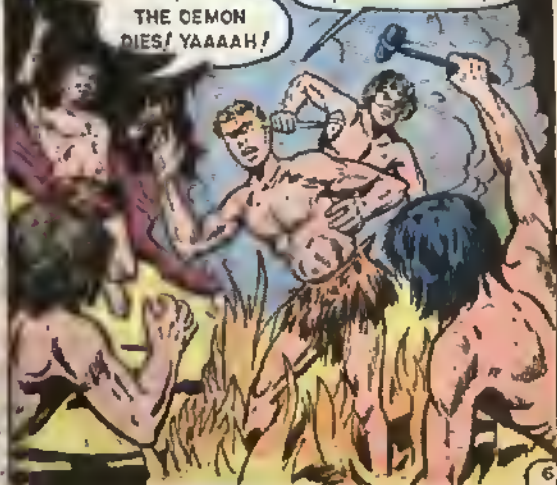
*SO LIKE MANY MEN IN ADVANCE OF THEIR PARTICULAR AGE, MAX BECAME A MARTYR...*

KILL! KILL! KILL THE STRANGER! THE DEMON OF THE WOODS! KILL!



YAAAAH! YAAAAH! THE DEMON DIES! YAAAAH!

NO! NO! NATAS HELP ME! TAKE ME BACK!





THE CALL WAS ANSWERED, AND BEFORE THE BEWILDERED EYES OF THE PRIMITIVE MEN . . .

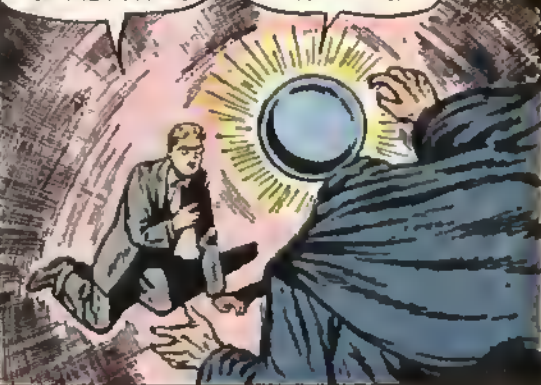
EE EY!  
EE...! THE STRANGER DISAPPEARS!  
LOOK, ANOTHER DEMON DRAWS  
HIM UP! AWAY! RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!



AGAIN TIME WAS BRIDGED AND MAX RETURNED TO THE WORLD OF THE PRESENT. . .

I IMPORE YOU,  
NATAS, RESCIND THE  
BARGAIN! LET ME  
LIVE MY OWN LIFE!  
I WANT NO MORE  
OF THE FUTURE!

TOO LATE, BRONISLAW! YOU  
WILLED THE AGREEMENT  
AND SIGNED IT IN BLOOD!  
I CANNOT CANCEL A LINE.  
LOOK UPON ME AND LEARN  
YOUR FATE!



YII!! THE CRYSTAL IS  
SHATTERING! WITH WHOM  
DID I MAKE THIS HORRIBLE  
BARGAIN!

YOU SHALL SOON KNOW!  
THE EVIL ONE HAS MANY  
NAMES AND MANY WAYS TO  
TRAP HIS VICTIMS.



NATAS! NO, NO!  
I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN  
IT WAS SATAN, THE  
OVERLORD OF EVIL!

COME, THERE  
IS NO ESCAPE!  
THE BARGAIN  
MUST BE KEPT!  
A GREAT TASK  
AWAITS YOU,  
FOR ETERNITY,  
HA HA HA!



SAVE ME!  
SAVE ME!  
I BURN!  
EEEEYAAA!

BRONISLAW  
PURCHASED HIS  
OWN NICHE IN  
HELL! LET US  
SEE WHAT  
DESTINY  
AWAITS HIM!



MASTER TECHNICIAN/GENIUS!  
YET A SIMPLE JIGSAW ELUDES  
HIM. MAX WILL NEVER FIT THE  
PIECES TOGETHER. . .

HE REJECTED HIS OWN  
WORLD WHICH MIGHT HAVE  
BROUGHT HIM HAPPINESS  
FOR ONE WHERE THERE IS  
NOTHING BUT ETERNAL  
AGONY AND PAIN!



THE  
—END



# THE GRENOBLE CURSE

It was a long, wide marble staircase, befitting a great chateau, and though across its steps had trod many historic events, it had never until now been the direct cause of death. Now the Comte de Grenoble lay at its foot, his body bent and twisted, blood streaming from a great gash in his head. But when his young wife Denise, screaming to rouse the servants, rushed down to where she had pushed him, the last of life had not yet fled his body.

"You—you shouldn't have done it, Denise," he groaned. "I am old . . . my time would soon have come. You could have waited." His jaw sagged, and she thought he had breathed his last. But with effort he opened his eyes; his voice was a strangled whisper. "Now the curse is upon you," he said. "Now you will suffer the Grenoble Curse."

"Fool!" she spat at him. "Old two-horned fool! I'm glad I did it!"

But the Comte de Grenoble could not hear.

He was buried with ceremony in the family crypt, the young and beautiful Denise put on widow's black, and she retired to her chambers, refusing to come out, even for meals. "How hard she takes it," everybody whispered, but in her rooms the Comtesse paced back and forth restlessly. Seven days after the Comte had died, she could stand it no longer.

"Marcel," she said to the butler when he brought in her morning coffee, "distribute this money to all the servants and have everybody out by noon. I am closing the chateau today. My grief is too great here where my happiness was."

And at noon, when the door closed behind Marcel, the last to go, Denise took off her widow's weeds, dressed herself in a sprightly Jacques Fath traveling suit, and hung a colored handkerchief in her bedroom window.

The night was as dark as she'd hoped it would be, but she waited impatiently. At ten o'clock a car, its headlights dimmed, drove up the graveled drive, and Denise ran quickly downstairs and threw wide the door.

"I thought you'd never come," she said, lifting her mouth for a kiss.

"Fortunately, a dark night," the man said. "No one will see us go."

At his words, she turned her head quickly, offering only her cheek. "I hope I have not made a mistake in you," she said. She measured him coolly.

"Remy Freneau," she said, as if itemizing a bill of accounts, "gentleman, handsome as the devil . . . but destitute! And cautious as a lamb. Don't you know, you handsome idiot, there isn't a soul within half a mile?"

She led him upstairs to her chambers, pointed to the four suitcases packed and ready.

"Do you have . . . everything?" he said.

"Everything," she smiled. "Every sapphire, emerald, diamond. Every bracelet, ring, necklace. Every valuable paper, deed, stock. We shall go to Paris and every night drink a toast to the Grenoble wealth—and every night jter at his curse."

"Curse?" said Remy, blanching.

"This is the twentieth century, idiot," Denise said. "The old goat had to have his dying joke. Now take the bags."

He bent, grasped with each hand a bag—and stopped suddenly. "What's that?" he whispered. "I thought the servants were all gone." He bit his lip. "Again. Someone laughing . . . across the hall."

"It's only our imaginations working overtime. Come, I will show you." But before she opened the door across the hall, she turned. "Remember," she whispered, "I did the deed. But your hand urged mine." And she opened the door to the Comte's chambers.

"See," she said. "Nobody here. Besides, voices in the night cannot harm us."

"Wait!" His hand fell on her arm. "I thought you took all the jewels."

"I combed every inch of this—" She stopped as her eye fell to where he pointed. A book, a heavy Morocco-bound tome, yellow with age, sat on the Comte's desk. On its cover gleamed a cluster of rubies and emeralds. "This—" she breathed, "this wasn't here an hour ago. I swear it."

His voice was harsh. "Then let's go."

"No! I killed for this! I won't let hallucinations or a magician's trickery stop me now!" she strode to the desk, tried to dislodge the jewels from the book. "They won't budge," she said; and with a frantic pull tore off the cover.

"We can put it in the suitcase, Remy. It will lie flat. Come—what . . . what is it?"

"Look," he said; and put his handkerchief to his forehead. "Read."

She stood by his side and they read together the words on the flyleaf page opposite the torn cover:



*Whoever brings harm to the Grenoble heir  
Will worse than the victim finally fare.  
And after he lies in his grave a week,  
He'll return from the grave, vengeance to  
wreak.*

*For Grenoble blood, when shed in the land,  
Will not wash off the killer hand.*

"Wonderful!" Denise murmured. "More jewels—more riches!"

"What are you talking about?" Remy's voice was hoarse. "We should get out . . . The curse!" "Every old family has legends," she said, pressing his arm. "It's nothing. Seven hundred years ago, the first Comte de Grenoble befriended an itinerant sorcerer—hid him from the enraged townspeople. And he repaid with stupid doggerel. Every old family has these tales. The old goat of a Comte told me about it on our wedding day. That's nothing—but this . . .!" She pointed to the crude diagram below the curse. "Do you know what this is?" She flipped the page, scanned the lines hurriedly. "An inventory!" she breathed. "Enough jewels for a king's ransom. And the diagram—that's the vault! I have never been below—but the diagram is clear. Clear enough for a child."

But Remy stood tense. "I say we depart—now. We have enough now."

Denise's eyes were shining. "One never has enough of jewels, darling." She took his hand. "Do you know what this means, Remy? Can you conceive of such riches? All there in the vault—for us!"

"You will destroy us," Remy said. "Your greed will be our undoing!"

"Now you're being silly, Remy. And I don't like you to be silly. To plan death—and to be afraid of a sorcerer's verse, seven hundred years old. That is being very silly, Remy." She tore out the page with the diagram. "Come, we shall go down to the vault."

Muttering under his breath, Remy followed her. "Take candles, dear," she said.

He found candles, and when they reached the cellar door he lighted them, for belowstairs there was no wiring for bulbs. He held the candles high as they walked down the stone steps, their heels clanking on the ancient masonry. The stone walls were damp; the entire belowground had the fetid, musty smell of cold, sealed earth and stoneworks that have not known sunlight or clear air for ages. Remy shuddered.

"I wish we were out of here," he said.

"Soon, darling, soon. And rich as moguls."

The light flickered. The sound of Remy's heels stopped.

"Over here, dear," she said. "That grilled door

there. Yes—that's it!" She turned when there was no sound. She saw Remy standing stiffly, his head bent, peering at his palms. Her voice suddenly touched a note of clamor, "What is it?" She came back to him. "What is it, Remy?"

Relief crossed his features. "N-nothing. Only for a moment I thought—"

"Thought what, Remy?"

"The—the curse. Blood on the hand."

She smiled. "Now you see. It's all nonsense, as I said."

Again they went forward. They stopped before the grilled door. There were no keys, but it opened to their touch. Their breathing became sharp.

"There," she said. "The fourth stone block. It comes out."

She held the candles while he tugged. The stone was clammy, but loose, and when it came out the stones next above and on either side of it were dislodged also. Within the wall was a deep vault, and within the vault a metal box. He reached for it.

"Don't stop now," she said. "You can't—What is it, Remy?"

"The—the voice. I thought—"

"You're mad," she said. But her eyes were wide.

He pulled out the box and it opened and within lay a tyrant's dream. Denise uttered a moan and dipped her hands, and jewels cascaded through her fingers like multi-colored bubbles. "A continent!" she gasped. "A world—a world of jewels! Oh, Remy!"

Then suddenly, with a deep sigh, her body stiffened. There was no ignoring the sound now. A soft bemused cackle of laughter. And something that sounded like a clinking of hard metal pieces. Coins—or perhaps keys.

"Remy!" It burst out of her in a shriek.

They turned toward each other, clasped hard. There could be no doubt. The chuckling was eerie in the dank gloom. And again there was the tinkling, the clinking of— Suddenly, as if on a common impulse, they rushed for the grilled door. But it would not open. It was as if a force held it on the other side. And as Denise and Remy pushed, sweating, the clinking of keys sounded again—and then the harsh, grating sound as of a lock being turned. Remy banged furiously at the grill and after a while he began to yell. But Denise said tonelessly, "Not a soul within half a mile!"

And they looked at each other, and at the door through which they could not pass, and, in the waning light of the candles, their eyes turned simultaneously to their hands, on which a bright red stain was slowing beginning to spread . . .



# THRUST of a GHOST LANCE

INHUMAN FIEND, WHY HAVE YOU DESTROYED MY GREAT ARMS COLLECTION? WHO ARE YOU WHO DARES TEST THE POWERS OF THE HOUSE OF TURINO?

I AM DUKE MALVO, UNCLE TO THIS ROTTEN LINE, WHICH IN DEATH I VOWED TO DESTROY! THE GRAVE CANNOT HOLD ME UNTIL THE LAST TURINO'S BLOOD IS SPILLED!

IT WAS RIGHT AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR WHEN THE FIRST DIRE EVENTS OCCURRED WHICH ROCKED THE HOUSE OF TURINO...

DOWN WITH THE TURINOS, THE BLOOD SUCKERS! THE ROTTEN PROFITEERS! PAY FOR OUR INJURIES, YOU SABOTEURS! TRAITORS!



THE ENRAGED EX-SOLDIERS, MAIMED BY FAULTY TURINO WEAPONS, HAD COME SEEKING INDEMNITIES, BUT INSTEAD, RECEIVED...

THERE'S THAT DEVIL HIMSELF, COUNT LUIGI! HE'S RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR INJURIES! TEAR HIM APART!

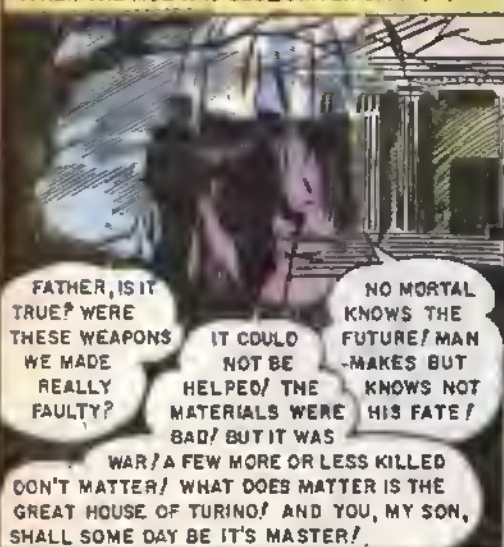
BACK, YOU SWINE! DRIVE THEM OUT OF THE VILLA, GUARDS! SHOOT TO KILL IF NECESSARY!

FOR SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS THE ARMORERS OF THE HOUSE OF TURINO HAD PROSPERED WHILE EUROPE BLED. DOWN THE CENTURIES EACH TURINO WAS, LIKE HIS PREDECESSOR, UNSCRUPULOUS, SELLING DEFECTIVE WEAPONS EVEN TO HIS OWN COUNTRYMEN. CURSED BY MILLIONS, THE TURINOS LIVED ON, GORGED WITH WEALTH, NO CRACK APPEARING IN THE MIGHTY FORTRESS THEY HAD BUILT... UNTIL COUNT LUIGI, THE COLLECTOR, REIGNED. THEN FATE ENTERED TO UNLOCK A CENTURIES' OLD CURSE WHICH RIPPED FROM AN UNTIMELY GRAVE... THE KNIGHT IN ROTTEN ARMOR.





WHEN THE MOB HAD BEEN DRIVEN OFF. . .



FATHER, IS IT TRUE? WERE THESE WEAPONS WE MADE REALLY FAULTY?

IT COULD NOT BE HELPED! THE MATERIALS WERE BAD! BUT IT WAS

NO MORTAL KNOWS THE FUTURE! MAN MAKES BUT KNOWS NOT HIS FATE!

WAR! A FEW MORE OR LESS KILLED DON'T MATTER! WHAT DOES MATTER IS THE GREAT HOUSE OF TURINO! AND YOU, MY SON, SHALL SOME DAY BE IT'S MASTER!

BUT FATHER, DON'T YOU HAVE PITY FOR THOSE PEOPLE? HOW CAN THEY WORK AND SUPPORT A FAMILY?

THAT IS NOT OUR CONCERN! FORGET IT! LOOK INSTEAD UPON MY GREAT ARMS COLLECTION, THE FINEST IN THE WORLD!

WHAT—NO HEART, COUNT? SOON IT WILL BE TOO LATE FOR REGRETS!



BUT NELLO COULD NOT FORGET AND IN ANGRY OUTBURST...

I AM NOT INTERESTED IN THIS STUPID COLLECTION! I AM ASHAMED THAT MY NAME IS TURINO! I WILL NOT SUCCEED YOU!

NELLO, MY SON, WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? DO YOU WANT TO KILL ME? OH, MY HEART! I FEEL A STROKE COMING ON!



THE FAKED HEART ATTACK HAD THE DESIRED EFFECT...

I—I DIDN'T MEAN TO HURT YOU! NO, FORGET WHAT I SAID! I WILL NOT DESERT YOU, EVER!

MY SON... I HAVEN'T LONG TO LIVE! YOU MUST BECOME MASTER OF TURINO! NOW TAKE ME TO THE CASTLE! IT WILL EASE THE PAIN TO SEE HOW THE CONSTRUCTION WORK IS GOING ON!



WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT THAT THE CASTLE BE REBUILT? NO ONE WILL EVER LIVE IN THAT ROGK PILE!

IT IS A SYMBOL OF OUR GREATNESS! IN IT THE FIRST ARMOR MADE BY A TURING WAS FORGED! BUT LOOK HOW SLOWLY THE WORK HAS PROGRESSED... I SHALL HAVE TO SPEAK TO THE FOREMAN!



IN THREE WEEKS YOU HAVE MADE NO PROGRESS! IT'S AN OUTRAGE! YOU ARE ROBBING ME!

THERE IS SOMETHING STRANGE HERE! WALLS COLLAPSE AND FLOORS GIVE WAY AS IF SOMETHING

ROTTEN WERE BENEATH THE VERY FOUNDATION!



BACK! THE WALLS ARE FALLING!

AAAII! THERE ARE THREE WORKMEN INSIDE! THEY'LL BE CRUSHED TO DEATH! THE DEVIL HIMSELF MUST BE IN THAT CASTLE!





*As the dust settled, Count Luigi stood transfixed, for he alone saw the vision...*

STOP TRYING TO REBUILD THE CASTLE! IT WILL NEVER STAND! IT WILL NEVER STAND! IT ROTS AT THE FOUNDATION, JUST LIKE THE HOUSE OF TURINO FOR THE CRIMES IT HAS COMMITTED!

AAARH! WHAT DOES IT MEAN—THAT HORRIBLE SPECTRE'S WARNING? NELLO, NELLO, COME BACK! MY HEART!

IT IS YOUR OWN ACTS COMING BACK TO PLAGUE YOU!



*While the Count lay in a coma...*

I KNOW THAT ARTURO WAS WORKING DOWN HERE! WE MUST CLEAR THIS WHOLE DUNGEON, CARLO!

LOOK WHAT WE DUG UP! THE COUNT WILL PAY A NICE BONUS FOR THAT SUIT OF ARMOR!



*As the rubble was cleared away...*

AAAAH, MY BONES ARE WEARY FROM LYING HERE ALL THOSE CENTURIES! WHERE IS THE COUNT! BRING HIM HERE AT ONCE!

EEEE! BY MY SOUL, THE IRON MAN MOVES! HE SPEAKS! CARLO RUN FOR YOUR LIFE!



*By this time, the Count had recovered sufficiently to sneer at the wild story...*

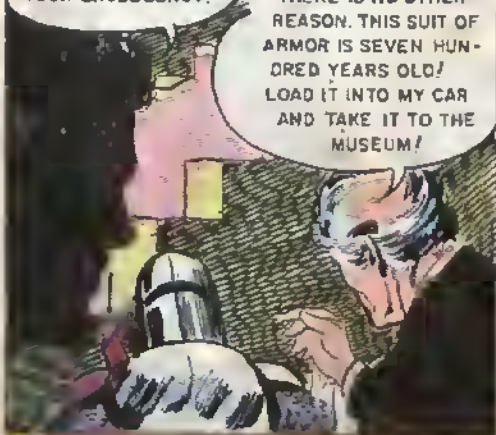
I SWEAR BY MY NAME THE IRON MAN MOVED AND SPOKE!

BAH, YOU ARE LIKE OLD WOMEN! SEE, THERE HE LIES! WONDERFUL! WONDERFUL! A FIND FOR MY MUSEUM!



AND HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THE FRESH BLOOD ON HIS CHEST, YOUR EXCELLENCY?

UMMM...! IT IS SIMPLE! ONE OF YOU MUST HAVE CUT HIMSELF! THERE IS NO OTHER REASON. THIS SUIT OF ARMOR IS SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS OLD! LOAD IT INTO MY CAR AND TAKE IT TO THE MUSEUM!



*In the museum workshop several hours later, when the armor was unfastened...*

I SHOULD SAY, YOUR EXCELLENCY, THAT THIS IS THE VERY EARLIEST ARMOR MADE BY YOUR ANCESTORS. A RARE FINO! WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH THE BONY ONE?

BURY HIM IN OUR OWN CEMETERY. HE MAY BE ONE OF MY OWN ANCESTORS! AND I WANT THAT SUIT OF ARMOR CLEANED, POLISHED AND PLACED IN THE MUSEUM TOMORROW!





THE FOLLOWING DAY WHEN THE  
COUNT MADE HIS INSPECTION TOUR...

AAH, THERE IT IS! THEY WORKED ALL  
NIGHT TO PUT IT IN SHAPE... MY  
EYES ARE WEAK—I MUST GET  
CLOSER!



BRUNO, EZIO...MAY  
YOUR SOULS ROT!  
WHAT HAVE YOU  
DONE HERE? WHAT  
KIND OF JOKE IS  
THIS?



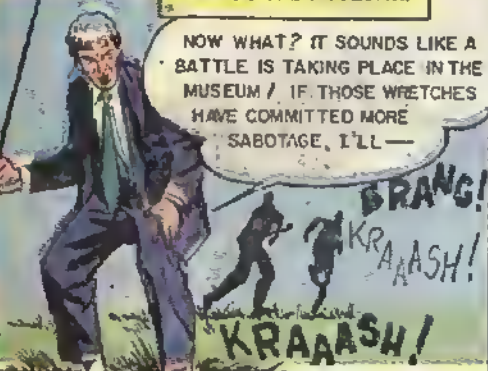
WHAT IS  
WRONG,  
COUNT  
LUGI?

THE DEVIL MUST  
BE IN THAT ARMOR!  
WE SWEAR WE  
SPENT TEN HOURS  
SCRAPING AND  
POLISHING! IT  
SHONE LIKE  
A MIRROR!

OUT, OUT!  
LIARS!  
SCOUNDRELS!  
YOU ARE  
FINISHED HERE!  
IF YOU SNOW  
YOUR FACES AT  
VILLA TURINO, I'LL  
HAVE YOUR BONES  
BROKEN!



SUDDENLY, AS THE COUNT HALTED HIS PURSUIT  
OUTSIDE THE MUSEUM...



NOW WHAT? IT SOUNDS LIKE A  
BATTLE IS TAKING PLACE IN THE  
MUSEUM / IF THOSE WRETCHES  
HAVE COMMITTED MORE  
SABOTAGE, I'LL—

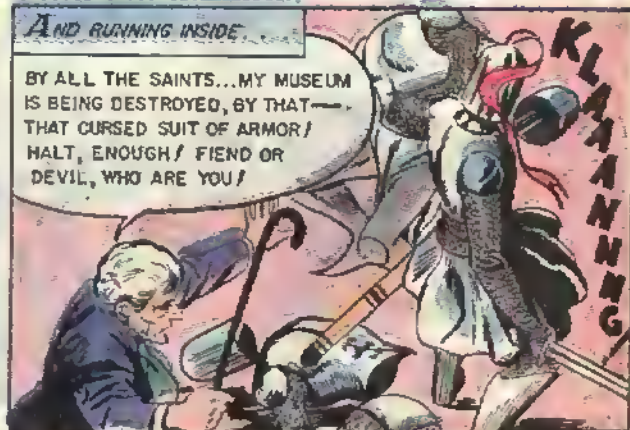
BRANG!

KRAASH!

KRAASH!

AND RUNNING INSIDE...

BY ALL THE SAINTS...MY MUSEUM  
IS BEING DESTROYED, BY THAT—  
THAT CURSED SUIT OF ARMOR!  
HALT, ENOUGH! FIEND OR  
DEVIL, WHO ARE YOU!



I AM DUKE MALVO, THE UNCLE OF  
THE FIRST TURINO ARMORER...THE  
FIRST OF THE WHOLE MURDEROUS  
LINE, OF WHICH YOU SHALL BE THE  
LAST / DO YOU KNOW HOW IN THE  
DIM PAST YOUR BLOODY ANCESTOR  
SEIZED MY INHERITANCE? LISTEN!



IT WAS THE EVE OF  
ST. CECILIA'S DAY,  
TWELVE HUNDRED  
AND FORTY SIX. MY  
NEPHEW LORENZO WAS  
FINISHING MY SUIT OF ARMOR FOR  
THE TOURNAMENT...

LORENZO, MY NEPHEW,  
WILL THE ARMOR  
WITHSTAND THE  
THRUST OF A  
SPEAR? TO-  
MORROW I FIGHT  
FOR MY LIFE IN A  
TOURNAMENT!

NOTHING  
CAN PIERCE  
THIS ARMOR,  
SIRE! YOU SHALL  
BE INVINCIBLE,  
MY UNCLE!



I WAS FIRST IN THE  
LISTS. MY OPPONENT  
WAS A DEADLY ENEMY  
FROM LOMBARDY...

I HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR!  
MY ARMOR WILL TURN AWAY  
EVERY THRUST OF HIS  
SPEAR!





**BUT I WAS WRONG, TERRIBLY WRONG, FOR AS WE  
CROSSED LANCES...**

DIE, YOU  
VILLAIN!

AAARGH! I'M UNDOONE!  
THE ARMOR DID NOT  
HOLD! THE SPEAR WENT  
THROUGH LIKE PAPER...  
AAAAA!!!

**AND AS I LAY DYING IN MY TENT...**

YES, UNCLE,  
I TRICKED YOU!  
I MADE YOU A SUIT OF  
HALF ROTTEN ARMOR!  
I WANTED YOU TO DIE!  
NOW THE ESTATE, THE  
CASTLE, ALL YOUR  
LANDS WILL BELONG  
TO ME! HA HA HA!

HEAVEN CURSE  
YOU AND ALL  
YOUR KINO,  
LORENZO! YOU  
SHALL NOT ESCAPE  
ME, EVEN IF I MUST  
RETURN FROM THE  
GRAVE TO REVENGE  
MYSELF!

AND SO I HAVE RETURNED, FOR  
NONE OF THE TURINOS DOWN  
THROUGH THE CENTURIES HAVE  
MENDED THEIR WAYS. ALL ARE  
ROTTEN TO THE CORE!

IT WAS IN  
YOUR POWER  
TO SAVE  
YOURSELF!  
YOUR ACTS HAVE  
CONDEMNED  
YOU!

**GATHERING ALL HIS HIRELINGS, THE COUNT RETURNED  
TO THE MUSEUM...**

BUT, YOUR EXCELLENCY, THE  
STORY YOU TELL IS  
IMPOSSIBLE!

QUET, YOU WILL  
SOON SEE FOR YOUR-  
SELF! EVERY MAN ON  
GUARD!

HELP! HELP!  
SAVE ME!

**BUT NO FORCE WAS NECESSARY...**

IT'S INCREDIBLE! WE BURIED THE  
REMAINS OF THE STRANGE KNIGHT  
AND HE RETURNED TO HIS SUIT OF  
ARMOR! BUT HOW CAN A DEAD  
MAN...? MY MIND  
CANNOT FATHOM  
IT!

I SAW THE  
FIEND WITH MY  
OWN EYES! I WANT HIM  
BURIED, ARMOR AND  
ALL, IN A TEN-FOOT  
SLAB OF CONCRETE...  
AT ONCE!

**WHEN THE COUNT'S ORDERS WERE  
FULFILLED...**

ONLY SATAN  
COULD BRING  
HIM BACK  
NOW!

NOW I FEEL  
SAFE! I CAN START  
PREPARING FOR THE  
GREAT SEVEN HUN-  
DREDTH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE FOUNDING OF  
OUR HOUSE. I HAVE A  
WONDERFUL TREAT  
PLANNED FOR OUR  
GUESTS!

**ON THE DAY OF THE GREAT  
CELEBRATION...**

SO THIS IS WHY  
YOU SENT ME TO  
ROME FOR TWO  
WEEKS! YOU'VE  
TURNED THE  
CLOCK BACK  
SEVEN HUNDRED  
YEARS! WHAT  
A SPECTACLE!

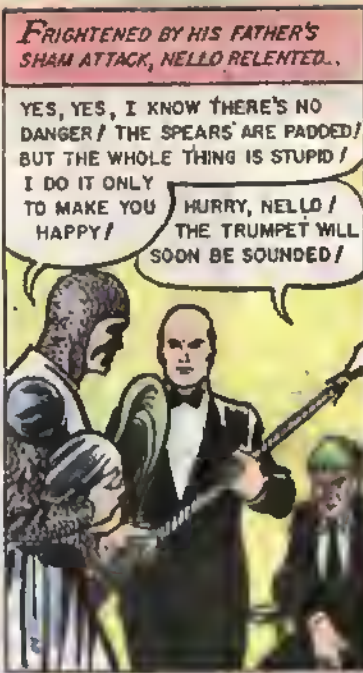
YES, AND I'M  
STAGING A  
TOURNAMENT ON  
THIS VERY FIELD,  
JUST LIKE THEY  
DID IN MY  
ANCESTORS'  
TIMES! YOU,  
NELLO, WILL  
WEAR THE COLORS  
OF THE HOUSE  
OF TURINO!





I'LL HAVE NO PART OF THIS SILLY GAME! WHY SHOULD I HONOR A LOT OF CUTTHROAT ANCESTORS? NO, I'LL NOT DO IT!

NELLO, WHEN YOU SPEAK LIKE THAT IT HURTS ME... I FEEL FAINT / OOOH, MY HEART!



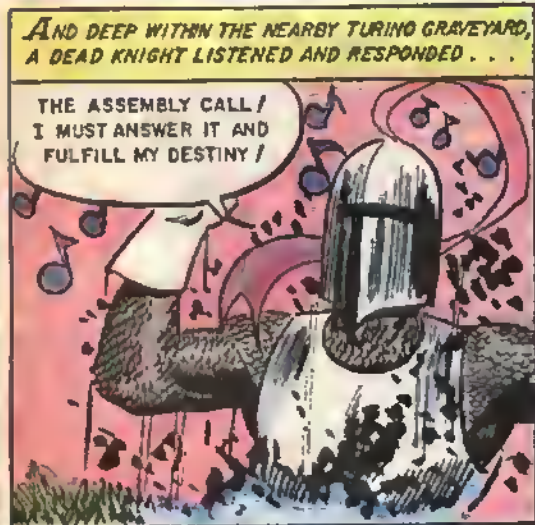
*FRIGHTENED BY HIS FATHER'S SHAM ATTACK, NELLO RELENTED...*

YES, YES, I KNOW THERE'S NO DANGER! THE SPEARS ARE PADDED! BUT THE WHOLE THING IS STUPID! I DO IT ONLY TO MAKE YOU HAPPY!

HURRY, NELLO! THE TRUMPET WILL SOON BE SOUNDED!

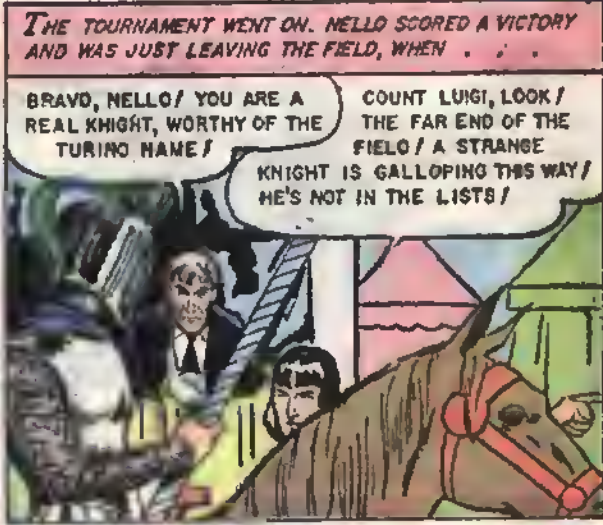


*THE ASSEMBLY CALL BLARED OUT TO ANNOUNCE THE BEGINNING OF THE TOURNAMENT...*



*AND DEEP WITHIN THE NEARBY TURINO GRAVEYARD, A DEAD KNIGHT LISTENED AND RESPONDED...*

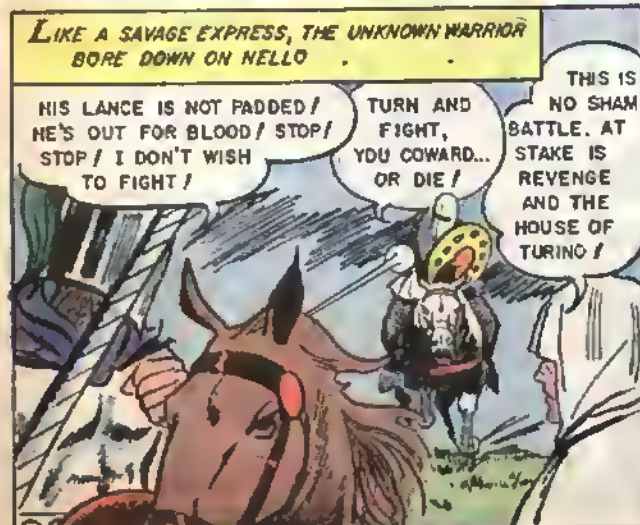
THE ASSEMBLY CALL! I MUST ANSWER IT AND FULFILL MY DESTINY!



*THE TOURNAMENT WENT ON. NELLO SCORED A VICTORY AND WAS JUST LEAVING THE FIELD, WHEN...*

BRAVO, NELLO! YOU ARE A REAL KNIGHT, WORTHY OF THE TURINO NAME!

COUNT LUIGI, LOOK! THE FAR END OF THE FIELD! A STRANGE KNIGHT IS GALLOPING THIS WAY! HE'S NOT IN THE LISTS!

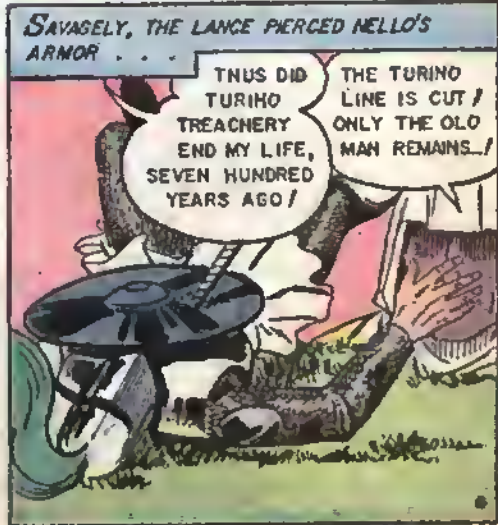


*LIKE A SAVAGE EXPRESS, THE UNKNOWN WARRIOR BORE DOWN ON NELLO*

HIS LANCE IS NOT PADDED! HE'S OUT FOR BLOOD! STOP! STOP! I DON'T WISH TO FIGHT!

TURN AND FIGHT, YOU COWARD... OR DIE!

THIS IS NO SHAM BATTLE. AT STAKE IS REVENGE AND THE HOUSE OF TURINO!



*SAVAGELY, THE LANCE PIERCED NELLO'S ARMOR...*

THUS DID TURINO TREACHERY END MY LIFE, SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS AGO!

THE TURINO LINE IS CUT! ONLY THE OLD MAN REMAINS!



THE OLD COUNT HURRIED TO THE LAD'S SIDE.



HELLO / HELLO / MY SON! SPEAK TO ME!

HE'S DEAD, YOUR EXCELLENCY! THE SPEAR PIERCED HIS HEART!

AT THE FAR END OF THE FIELD, THE STRANGE KNIGHT QUIETLY SUBMITTED TO CAPTURE.



PULL THE MURDERER DOWN! TAKE HIS HELMET OFF!

LET ME THROUGH! THIS OLD HAND WILL REVENGE MY SON! I'LL HACK THE DOG TO BITS!

MAKE WAY FOR THE COUNT!



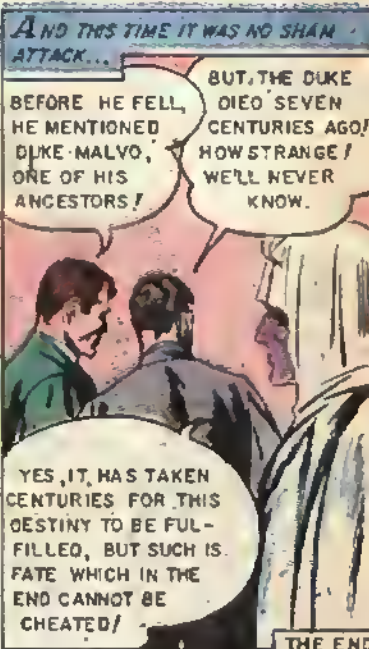
THE HELMET'S RUSTED WITH AGE... HARD TO REMOVE!

B-BUT THE KNIGHT WHO KILLED MY SON... HIS ARMOR GLEANED??? QUICKLY, OFF WITH HIS HELMET! I MUST KNOW!



BY ALL THE SAINTS! A CORPSE IN ARMOR / LOOK, THE COUNT FALLS!

DUKE MALVO...! I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN! FIRST, MY SON... AND NOW AAAAH—MY HEART!



AND THIS TIME IT WAS NO SHAM ATTACK...

BEFORE HE FELL, HE MENTIONED DUKE MALVO, ONE OF HIS ANCESTORS!

BUT, THE DUKE DIED SEVEN CENTURIES AGO! HOW STRANGE! WE'LL NEVER KNOW.

YES, IT HAS TAKEN CENTURIES FOR THIS OESTINY TO BE FUL-FILLED, BUT SUCH IS FATE WHICH IN THE END CANNOT BE CHEATED!

THE END

STATEMENT REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233) SHOWING THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION OF

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1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are: Publisher, A. A. Wyn, 23 West 47th St., New York 36, N. Y.; Editor, M. J. Phillips, 23 West 47th St., New York 36, N. Y.; Managing Editor, None; Business Manager, A. A. Wyn, 23 West 47th St., New York 36, N. Y.

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5. The average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the 12 months preceding the date shown above was: (This information is required from daily, weekly, semi-weekly, and tri-weekly newspapers only.) Not Required.

A. A. WYN  
(Signature of editor, publisher, business manager or owner)

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 21st day of September, 1953.

ETTA HART, Notary Public, State of New York  
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chance to become a  
master westerner — in  
a jiffy! Imagine — you  
can make HAPPY the  
COWBOY actually walk  
(in your own voice, of  
course) Pull the string  
in the back of his head  
— watch his lips move —  
hear your own words  
coming right out of  
HAPPY'S mouth! See how  
cool he looks — up to  
his cowboy hat, wash-  
able plastic shirt and west-  
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windshield — floor, 2 cars with windows that open and close.
- Car moves and turns.
- 8 police cars with gun that bumps and cracks, 1 ambulance with siren  
and wailing bell, 2 cars with motors that register fast, 1 fire chief car  
with bell that rings and wows. All 8 cars made of durable steel. . .  
rubber wheels cannot come out . . . bottom completely enclosed . . . all  
new two-tone and metallic colors . . . all differently colored. **SEND NO  
MONEY** (C.O.D. you pay postage. Send with order, we pay postage.)

**2.98**  
Only  
COMPLETE

**SEND COUPON!** **NOVELTY MART, Dept. 156**  
59 East 8th Street, New York 3, N. Y.

Customers: Please send me the following:  
Enclosed find: ☐ Check or M.O. ☐ C.O.D. plus postage.

<input type="checkbox"/> T. V. Projector . . . \$2.98 (3 Films \$1.00)	<input type="checkbox"/> Lana . . . \$3.98
<input type="checkbox"/> HAPPY THE COWBOY \$2.98	<input type="checkbox"/> Action Cars . . . \$2.98

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

**SEND NO MONEY** C.O.D. WE PAY POSTAGE AND HANDLING CHARGES. REMIT WITH ORDER WE PAY POSTAGE.



# Tell Me What You Want Money For ... I'LL HELP YOU GET ALL YOU NEED!

**EASY TO EARN \$50 TO \$150 AND  
MORE IN JUST YOUR SPARE TIME!**

What do YOU want that money will buy? Whether it's new clothes, sporting equipment, household appliances, or anything else . . . just check the coupon. I'll show you how you can earn all the money you need, quickly and easily, taking orders for STUART Greeting Cards! And I'll send you everything you need to start earning right away.

## YOU DON'T NEED EXPERIENCE!

It takes no special skill to sell a complete assortment of beautiful new Birthday and other Greeting Cards—a generous supply for year 'round use—for just \$1.00. This exciting bargain really sells itself. All you do is show it to friends and neighbors and you keep up to HALF the price as your cash profit! Say you want anything that costs \$50.00. Sell only 100 boxes and you've got the money! Folks will also want our exciting new Gift Items, Stationery, Gift Wrappings and the other fast-sellers in our big line. They help you earn still more easy money!

## GET MONEY-MAKING KIT ON FREE TRIAL!

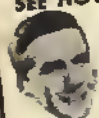
See for yourself how easy it is to get the money for anything you want. Check the coupon and mail it now. I'll send you a complete kit of samples including fast-selling assortments on FREE TRIAL and full facts on how to reach your goal fast. Don't delay. Act TODAY!



**MR. B. J. STUART**  
President of Stuart Greetings.  
Has Helped Thousands Make  
Good Money!



## SEE HOW WELL OTHERS HAVE DONE!



I made \$21.75 in approximately 3 hours one afternoon. Everyone just loves these beautiful greeting cards and it's so easy to show and sell them.  
C.R.P., North Carolina

This is the easiest and most dignified way to earn money for Scout camp. Christmas presents and spending money in general. P.E., New York



**STUART GREETINGS, INC.**

325 W. Randolph St., Dept. 627, Chicago 6, Ill.

## RUSH COUPON FOR FREE TRIAL KIT!

**Mr. B. J. Stuart, STUART GREETINGS**  
325 W. Randolph St., Dept. 627, Chicago 6, Ill.

Dear Mr. Stuart: I've checked off what I want money for:

- ☐ Sporting Equipment
- ☐ New Clothes
- ☐ Team Uniforms
- ☐ Electric Toaster
- ☐ Portable Radio
- ☐ .....

Please rush full facts on how to make the money, and sample kit of assortments ON FREE TRIAL.

Name.....

Address.....

City & Zone..... State.....

(If for a club, give its name below.)